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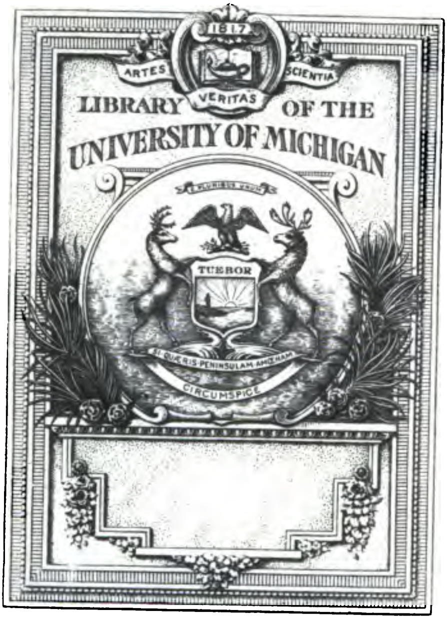
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OLD TIME AND YOUNG TOM

OLD TIME AND YOUNG TOM

By

ROBERT J. BURDETTE

Author of

SMILES YOKED WITH SIGHS
CHIMES FROM A JESTER'S BELLS, ETC.

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FOREWORD

When I was young I wrote it "Preface", because my Teachers, who were much older and wiser than I, told me so to do. Now that I am as old as they were, I write it "Foreword", because my new Teachers, who are very young and very wise, tell me I must. I do not care how I write it. Because I know full well that by and by other and newer Teachers, much younger and far wiser than any I have had heretofore, will instruct my sons, and after them, yet more Teachers, youngest and wisest of all, will compel my grandsons to spell the same thing yet differently. What is it to me, then, how the word is written? I write this page only because, ere the pen lays me aside, I want to set down the lecture wherewith, by the lullaby of the spoken voice, I have soothed the children of Adam to sleep for lo, these thirty-five years past, but which I have not set to the notation of the written page since first I wrote it in the joy of my heedless youth, a long generation ago.

"The Rise and Fall of the Mustache" is the oldest lecture in the world, so far as I know. It is also one of the longest. And I would add that it is the worst, but for the fact that I have written others since. It is so old that I came too late to write it myself. I had it from my father, who had it from his father, who had it from his father, and so on back to the time of the locust who carried away the first grain of corn.

In this discourse I have merely set down in disorder what people told me, and what they kept back from me; what they confessed with boasting, and what they denied with shame; what I saw, and what I thought I saw; what I knew and what I guessed, and what I deliberately imagined. Then, when I read what I had recorded, I saw that I had told the story of a man's life, which is so like any other man's, that the biography of an average man is also called the history of "his times". Yet, when I wrote this narrative I gave it a title, because I firmly believed I had written a comic parody on human life. I was not old enough to know that a burlesque proves the fact it caricatures.

I have said this lecture more than five thousand times. And now, on the printed page, I sadly miss the singsong soothing of the utterance. For stories are not written to read, they are told to hear, as children love to listen to them before their intelligence is spoiled by learning to read.

What, therefore, the laughing, gray-haired children of my audiences heard as "The Rise and Fall of the Mustache" their more decorous grandchildren may read as "Old Time and Young Tom".

Robert J. Burdette

OLD TIME AND YOUNG TOM

Old Time and Young Tom

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MUSTACHE

ONCE upon a time—last night, last week, a month ago, a year, five, ten years ago—something like that, I had a dream that I remember to this day, and that in itself is remarkable, for few dreams are made of stuff that endures. The dream you had last night you told this morning at the breakfast table very well, and everybody recognized it as a dream, because of its vivid unreality; but when you told it at noon it began to frazzle out at the edges; and when you told it this evening at the dinner table you made it up as you went along, every word of it, and everybody knew it, because it didn't sound anything like a dream.

But I think that to every man and woman God sends one dream in a lifetime that lasts so long as life lasts—one Bethel vision of loneliness and loving sympathy. I dreamed I was a boy again. Not a great, big, rollicking, football boy, trying to learn the new rules to play them in the old way, but a wee tiny boy; so little I couldn't sleep alone. So I was sleeping back in the dear old place, with my head pillowed on my mother's shoulder, that "blessed hollow of the shoulder" that Celia Thaxter said God made for some tired human head to rest in. I was so happy sleeping there that I woke up with an excess of comfort. I reached out my hand for her with a child's caress, and she wasn't there. Then I reached over on the other side, and she wasn't there. Then I sat bolt upright in the bed. There I was, half awake, half a hundred years old, all alone, in the dark, and my mother was gone! So homesick I was for her, I wanted to cry.

And then I laughed aloud to think how funny it would sound to hear an old man crying in the night, like a baby who wanted a drink. I put my head back on the pillow, and I wished—oh, how earnestly I wished!—that I was back in the dear old place, where I had been safe, safe, safe as I had never been since I left it. For half a minute I foolishly wished I was a boy again. But when I arose in the morning, when I settled down to my work, and felt the highest and noblest joy that comes into the soul of man or woman—the delight of having work to do and the happiness of doing it—I was so glad I wasn't a boy, and gladder still that never again in this life or in any other would I be a boy.

But sometimes a man says, "Oh, I don't know about that. I would like to be a boy again." "Why?" "Oh," he says, "a boy has such an easy time—no trouble—no care—no responsibility." Yes, I know, children have no troubles—only they have. They have more troubles than grown-up people. I do sympathize with grown-up people in trouble, but not enough to hurt me or do them much good. If a man got into a thousand troubles I would break my heart over him. But he doesn't. He gets into the same trouble a thousand times. That is different. I get tired of it after I have pulled him out of the same old hole, by his long silken ears, on the Sabbath day, about five hundred times. If he was anything but a man, by that time he would have sense enough to go around the hole or stay on his own side of it.

But a boy's troubles are all new, as he gets into one and another and another until he has gone the whole round of experimental experiences. He thought when he landed on this planet, it was a good, sweet, tender-hearted world, with a light caressing hand. Little by little he learns there is cruelty, injustice, meanness and treachery written on the calendar, even between the lines of love and truth. He can't understand this. It hurts him. He gets used to trouble by and by, as grown-up people do. Just as the soldier under the old system of military discipline would stand with his wrists leashed to the stake and his back bared for the punishment.

The sergeant standing at his side, counted with cruel deliberation the descending blows of the lash. When he got as far as "twenty—twenty-one—twenty-two—" that didn't hurt so much. By that time the soldier had caught the rhythm of the lash. He knew the blow was coming; he braced his shoulders and waited for it. His pride nerved him. His purpose of revenge burned in his soul like a smouldering volcano. You might whip the life out of him after that, and you could not wring a moan from his set teeth. But when the first blow uncoiled itself like a hissing serpent on the surprised and quivering shoulders—that startled the scream from him. That hurt. It had the whole back to hit on, and it hit in an unexpected place. It is the new trouble that hurts.

Think, then, what must have been the experience of the first family in the human race, when all the troubles in the world were not only new, but had to be invented. Adam and Eve are the only people in history who started out in life under the terrible handicap of being born full-grown. They had scarcely got their farm—the only one on earth—reduced to a kind of weed-producing, weather-fighting, grange-like order of things, with nothing to disturb the quiet, happy, care-free, independent life of the jocund farmer, except maybe a little rust in the oats; blight in the wheat; army-worm in the corn; Colorado beetles foraging the potato patch;

cutworms laying waste the cucumbers; curculio in the plums and borers perforating the apple-trees; a new kind of insect they couldn't guess the name of desolating the pastures; dry weather burning up the barley; wet weather rotting the corn; too cold for the melons and too hot for the strawberries; chickens dying with the pip; hogs being gathered to their fathers with the cholera; sheep fading away with a complication of things no man could remember; horses getting along as well as could be expected, with a little spavin, ring-bone, wolf-teeth, distemper, heaves, blind staggers, collar-chafes, saddle-galls, colic now and then, foundering occasionally, epizootic when there was nothing else; cattle going wild with the horn ail; moth in the beehives; snakes in the milk-house; moles in the kitchen garden—Adam had just about got through breaking wild land with a crooked stick, and settled down comfortably, when the sound of the Boy was heard in the land.

Did it ever occur to you that Adam was probably the most troubled and worried man that ever lived?

I have often pictured him as a careworn-looking man; a puzzled-looking farmer who would sigh fifty times a day, and run his irresolute fingers through his hair while he wondered what under the canopy he was going to do with those boys, and whatever was going to become of them. For you see they were the first and only boys on earth. There were no other parents in the neighborhood with whom Adam, in his moments of perplexity, could consult. There wasn't a boy in the country with whom Adam's boys could play and fight. And Adam had never been a boy himself; what could he know about boy nature or boy troubles and pleasures?

Imagine, if you can, the celerity with which he kicked off the leaves, and paced up and down in the moonlight the first time little Cain made the welkin ring when he had the colic. How could Adam know what ailed him? He couldn't tell Eve that she had been sticking the baby full of pins. He didn't even know enough to turn the vociferous infant over on his face and jolt him into serenity. If the fence corners on his farm had been overgrown with catnip, never an idea had Adam what to do with it. It is probable that after he got down on his knees and felt for thorns or snakes or rats in the bed, and thoroughly examined young Cain for bites or scratches, he passed him over to Eve with the usual remark:

"There, take *your* baby" (accent heavy on "your"), "and hush him up, for heaven's sake," and then went off and sat down under a distant tree with his fingers in his ears, and perplexity in his brain, while young Cain split the night with the most hideous howls the empty little world had ever listened to. It must have stirred the animals up to a degree unto which no menagerie has ever since attained. No sleep in the vicinity of Eden that night for baby, beasts or Adam. It is more than probable that the weeds got a long start of Adam the next day, while he lay around in shady places and slept in troubled dozes, disturbed, perhaps, by awful visions of possible twins and more colic.

And when the other boy came along, and the boys got old enough to sleep in a bed by themselves, they had no pillows to fight with. What comfort could two boys get out of pelting each other with fragments of moss or bundles of brush? What dismal views of future humanity Adam must have received from the glimpses of original sin which began to develop itself in his boys. How he must have wondered what put into their heads the thousand and one questions with which they plied their parents day after day. I wonder what he thought when they first began to string buckeyes on the cat's tail. And when night came there was no "hired girl" or black "mammy" to keep the boys quiet by telling them ghost stories. Adam didn't know so much as an anecdote.

Cain's education depended on his inexperienced parents, who had never seen a boy until they met Cain. There wasn't an educational help in the market. There wasn't an alphabet block in the county. There were no other boys in the republic to teach young Cain to lie, and swear, and smoke, and drink, fight and steal, and thus develop the boy's dormant statesmanship, and prepare him for the political duties of his maturer years. There wasn't a pocketknife in the universe that he could borrow—and lose. When he wanted to cut his finger, as all boys must do now and then, he had to cut it with a clam shell. There were no country relations upon whom little Cain could be inflicted for two or three weeks at a time, when his wearied parents wanted a little rest. There was nothing for him to play with. Adam couldn't show him how to make a kite. He had a much better idea of angels' wings than he had of a kite. If little Cain had even asked for such a simple bit of mechanism as a "shinny-club"—sometimes vulgarly called a "hockey-stick"—Adam would have gone out into the depths of the primeval forest and wept in helpless confessed ignorance.

Small wonder that Cain turned out "bad". I always thought he would. For his entire education depended on a most ignorant man, a man in the very palmiest days of his ignorance, who couldn't have known less if he had tried all his life on a high salary and had a man to help him. And the boy's education had to be conducted entirely upon the catechetical system; only, in this instance, the pupil asked the questions, and his parent teachers—heaven help them—had to answer at them.

For they could not take refuge from the steady stream of questions that poured in upon them day after day, by interpolating a fairy story, as you do when your boy asks you questions about something of which you never heard. For how could Adam begin, "Once upon a time", when with one incisive question Cain could pin him right back against the dead wall of creation, and make him either specify what time, or acknowledge the fraud? How could Eve tell him about *Jack and the Bean-Stalk,* when Cain, fairly crazy for some one to play with, knew perfectly well there was not, and never had been, another boy on the plantation? And as day by day Cain brought home things in his hands about which to ask questions that no mortal could answer, how grateful his bewildered parents must have been that he had no pockets in which to transport his collections. For many generations came into the fair young world, got into no end of trouble, and died out of it, before a boy's pocket solved the problem how to make the things contained seven times greater than the container.

The only thing that saved Adam and Eve from interrogational insanity was the paucity of the language. If little Cain had possessed the verbal abundance of the language in which men to-day are talked to death, his father's bald head would have gone down in shining flight to the ends of the earth to escape him, leaving Eve to look after the stock, save the crop, and raise her boy as best she could.

Which would have been, six thousand years ago, as to-day, just like a man.

Because it was no off-hand, absent-minded work answering questions about things in those spacious old days, when there was crowds of room, and everything grew by the acre. When a placid but exceedingly unanimous-looking animal went rolling by, producing the general effect of an eclipse, and Cain would shout:

"Oh, lookee, lookee, pa! what's that?"

Then the patient Adam, trying to saw enough kitchen wood with a piece of flint to last over Sunday, would have to pause and gather up words enough to say:

"That, my son? That is only a mastodon *giganteus;* he has a bad look, but a placid temper."

And presently:

"Oh, pa! pa! What's that over yon?"

"Oh, bother," Adam would reply; "it's only a paleotherium, mammalia pachydermata."

"Oh, yes; theliocomeafterus. Oh! lookee, lookee at this 'un!"

"Where, Cainny? Oh, that in the mud? That's only an acephala lamelli branchiata. It won't bite you, but you mustn't eat it. It's poison as politics."

"Whee! See there! see, see, see! What's him?"

"Oh, that? Looks like a plesiosaurus; keep out of his way; he has a jaw like—" And just in time Adam remembered that he had no mother-in-law.

"Oh, yes; a plenosserus. And what's that fellow, poppy?"

Torres

"That's a silurus malapterurus. Don't you go near him; he has the disposition of a Georgia mule."

"Oh, yes; a slapterus. And what's this little one?"

"Oh, it's nothing but an aristolochioid. Where did you get it? There, now, quit throwing stones at that acanthopterygian; do you want to get yourself kicked? And keep away from the nothodenatrichomanoides. My stars, Eve! where did he get that anonaceæ-hydrocharideo-nymphæoid? Do you never look after him at all? Here, you, Cain, get right away down from there, and chase that megalosaurius out of the melon patch, or I'll set the monopleuro branchian on you."

Just think of it, Christian man with a family to support, with last year's stock on your shelves, and a draft as long as a clothes-line to pay to-morrow! Think of it, woman, with all a woman's love and constancy, and a mother's sympathetic nature, with three meals a day three hundred and sixty-five times a year to think of, and the flies to chase out of the sitting-room; think, if your cherub boy was the only boy in the wide, wide world, and all his questions which now radiate in a thousand directions among other boys, who help him to cut his eye-teeth, were focused upon you!

Well, you have no time to pity Adam. You have your own boy to look after. Or, your neighbor has a boy, whom you can look after much more closely than his mother does, and much more to your own satisfaction than to the boy's comfort.

Your boy is, as Adam's boy was, an animal that asks questions. If there were any truth in the old theory of the transmigration of souls, when a boy died he would pass into an interrogation-point. And he'd stay there. He'd never get out of it; for he never gets through asking questions. The older he grows the more he asks, and the more perplexing his questions are, and the more unreasonable he is about wanting them answered to suit himself. Why, the oldest boy I ever knew—he was fifty-seven years old, and I went to school to him—could and did ask the longest, hardest, crookedest questions, that no fellow who used to trade off all his books for a pair of skates could answer. And when his questions were not answered to suit him, it was his custom—a custom more honored in the breeches than in the observance—to take up a long, slender, but exceedingly tenacious rod, which lay ever near the big dictionary, and smite with it the boy whose naturally-derived, Adamic ignorance was made manifest.

Ah, me, if the boy could only do as he is done by, and ferule the man or the woman who fails to reply to his inquiries, as he is himself corrected for similar shortcomings, what a valley of tears, what a howling wilderness he could make of this world.

Your boy, asking to-day pretty much the same questions, with heaven knows how many additional ones, that Adam's boy did, is told, every time that he asks one that you don't know anything about, just as Adam told Cain fifty times a day, that he will know all about it when he is a man. And so from the days of Cain down to the present generation of boys, the boy ever looks forward to the time when he will be a man and know everything.

His questions multiply when he begins learning the English language, which he never does learn, because it changes faster than any boy can grow, and no matter how he spells it some dictionary contradicts him. But always, to the boy, any language is merely a medium of communicating questions. He asks questions that no grown person would think of, and a score of "grown-ups" could not answer. We grow so weary of his interrogations at times that we say, "He asks such foolish questions." But no boy asks foolish questions. He asks questions we can not answer—that is what makes us tired. There is an old proverb, "Any fool can ask questions, but it takes a wise man to answer them." But a fool can not ask questions without at once exposing his folly and ignorance. One of the best and wisest school-teachers I ever suffered under used to mark the boys in class, not on their recitations, but on the questions they asked about the lesson.

There is no way in which a man exposes his ignorance so completely and thoroughly as by "butting into" a conversation and asking questions about the subject under discussion. His first question may betray his ignorance. Go to the court-house some day—go there before you have to; you will enjoy the illustration better. Here is a man on the witness-stand who tells a story apparently as straight as a rule—a clean-cut statement of facts. His testimony is so strong that we say, "Well, that settles the question for the prosecution; there is no use calling another witness." Then a lawyer on the other side takes the man in hand. Now, mind you, he does not contradict a word the man says; he simply asks him a few innocent-sounding questions, and the witness's beautiful story falls into a hundred fragments. Now, who was the fool, the man asking the questions, or the fellow in the witness-box, sweating himself to death trying to remember how he answered that same question the other time? Why, it took that lawyer years of study of books, and years of the profounder study of the deeper book of human nature, to learn to ask questions.

And the boy's questions have a philosophical meaning behind them. I remember going to a World's Fair, once upon a time, with a boy with whom I loved very dearly to travel—he showed me so many more things than I could have seen by myself. One day we ran up against a great big electric incubator, a machine where they hatched chickens by lightning. I have eaten some I thought had been struck by lightning in order to kill them. But this machine hatched them out. I thought it was an excellent opportunity to give the boy a little instruction in practical biology. I said: "Is it not wonderful, my son, to see how the little chicken comes out of the egg?" He said: "No. I don't see anything remarkable about that. I see easy enough how he gets out. What puzzles me is how the little beggar got in!"

Here is a man sitting down some evening, who wants to read about twenty pounds of evening paper before he goes to bed, and his little son is assisting him with irrelevant questions about various things. The wearied parent lowers the paper a little bit. "Bobbie," he says, "I will let you have one more question to-night; then I don't want to hear the sound of your voice for six weeks." Bobbie has one right on the hair-trigger, ready to fire when he gets the word. "Pa," he says, "is it true, what this book says, that a camel can go forty days without water?" "Yes, he can. Now, shut up." By and by the boy pleads—"Just one more." His father says: "Well, if it is a foolish one, you go to bed." The boy says: "How long could he go if he had water?" And the next minute Bobbie is under the blankets. Not to get warm—oh, no; he gets warm on the way up.

So, by and by we send the boy to school, and then he realizes that they are increased that rise up against him. Because now other people ask the questions, and he has to answer them. He learns how to sympathize with his parents. He gets tangled in the ungrammatical mazes of the English grammar, which has not yet been invented, and he gets blocked by mathematics. "Do you not know—" the dear patient teacher was looking at a cluster of errors on the blackboard—"do you not know that always and under all circumstances two and two make four?" The boy said: "No, sir; I do not." "What else can it possibly make?" And the boy said: "It depends. If you put one two in front of the other, it makes twenty-two every time."

And yet, all the time the boy is asking questions he is answering them, until we stand amazed at the breadth and depth of his knowledge. He asks questions and gets answers of teachers that we and the school board know not of. Day by day, great unprinted books, upon the broad pages of which the hand of nature has traced characters that only a boy can read, are spread out before him. He knows now where the first snow-drop lifts its tiny head, a pearl on the bosom of the barren earth, in the spring; he knows where the last Indian pink lingers, a flame in the brown and rustling woods, in the autumn days. His pockets are cabinets, from which he drags curious fossils, hideous beetles and bugs and things that you never saw before, and for which he has appropriate names of his own. He knows where there are three orioles' nests, and so far back as you can remember you never saw an oriole's nest in your life. He can tell you how to distinguish the good mushrooms from the poisonous ones, and poison grapes from good ones, and how he ever found out, except by eating both kinds, is a mystery to his mother. Every root, bud, leaf, berry or bark that will make any bitter tea, reputed to have marvelous medicinal virtues, he knows where to find, and in the season he does find, and brings home, and all but sends the entire family to the cemetery by making practical tests of his remedies.

As his knowledge broadens, his human superstition develops itself. He has a formula, repeating which nine times a day, while pointing his finger fixedly toward the sun, will cause warts to disappear from the hand. If the eight-day clock at home tells him it is two o'clock, and the flying leaves of the dandelion declare it is half past five, he will stand or fall with the dandelion.

He has a charm by which anything that has been lost may be found. He has a natural instinct for the woods, and can no more be lost in them than a squirrel. If the cow does not come home—and if she is a town cow, like a town man, she does not come home, three nights in the week—you lose half a day of valuable time looking for her. Then you pay a man three dollars to look for her two days longer, or as long as the appropriation holds out. Finally, a quarter sends a boy to the woods; he comes back at milking-time, whistling the tune that no man ever imitated, and the cow ambles contentedly along before him.

He has one particular marble which he regards with about the same superstitious reverence that a pagan does his idol. Carnelian, crystal, bull's-eye, china, pottery, boly, blood alley, or commie, whatever he may call it, there is "luck in it". When he loses this marble, he sees panic and bankruptcy ahead of him, and retires from business prudently, before the crash comes, failing, in true commercial style, with both pockets full of winnings, and a creditors' meeting in the back room.

A boy's world is open to no one but a boy. You never really revisit the glimpses of your boyhood, much as you may dream of it. After you get into a tail-coat and tight boots, you never again set foot in boy world. You lose this instinct for the woods; you can't tell a pig-nut tree from a pecan; you can't make friends with strange dogs; you can't make the terrific noises with your mouth; you can't invent the inimitable signals or the characteristic catchwords of boyhood.

He is getting on, is your boy. He reaches the dime-novel age. He wants to be a missionary, or a pirate. As far as he expresses any preference, he would rather be a pirate, an occupation in which there are more chances for making money, and fewer opportunities for being devoured. He develops a yearning love for school and study about this time, and every time he dreams of being a pirate he dreams of hanging his dear teacher at the yard-arm in the presence of the delighted scholars. His voice develops, even more rapidly and thoroughly than his morals. In the yard, on the house-top, down the street, around the corner; wherever there is a patch of ice big enough for him to break his neck on, or a pond of water deep enough to drown in, the voice of your boy is heard. He whispers in a shout, and converses, in confidential moments, in a shriek. He exchanges bits of back-fence gossip about his father's domestic matters with the boy living in the adjacent township, to which interesting revelations of home life the intermediate neighborhood listens with intense satisfaction, and the two home circles in helpless dismay.

He has an unconquerable hatred for company, and an aversion for walking down-stairs. For a year or two his feet never touch the stairway in his descent, and his habit of polishing the stair rail by using it as a passenger tramway soon breaks the other members of the family of the careless habit of setting a lamp or water-pitcher on the newel post. He wears the same size boot as his father; and on the driest dustiest days in the year, always manages to convey some mud on the carpets. He carefully steps over the door-mat, and until he is about seventeen years old he actually never knew there was a scraper at the front porch.

About this time, bold but inartistic pencil sketches break out mysteriously on the alluring background of the wall-paper. He asks, with great regularity, alarming frequency, and growing diffidence, for a new hat. You might as well buy him a new disposition. He wears his hat in the air and on the ground far more than he does on his head, and he never hangs it up that he doesn't pull the hook through the crown, unless the hook breaks off or the hat-rack pulls over.

He is a perfect Robinson Crusoe in inventive genius. He can make a kite that will fly higher and pull harder than a balloon. He can take out a couple of the pantry shelves and make a sled that is amazement itself. The mouse-trap he builds out of the water-pitcher and the family album is a marvel of mechanical ingenuity. So is the excuse he gives for such a selection of raw material. When, suddenly, some Monday morning, the clothes-line, without any just or apparent cause or provocation, shrinks sixteen feet, philosophy can not make you believe that the weather man did it with his little barometer. Because, far down the dusty street, you can see Tom in the dim distance, driving a prancing team, six-in-hand, with the missing link.

You send your boy on an errand. There are three ladies in the parlor. You have waited as long as you can, in all courtesy, for them to go. They have developed alarming symptoms of staying to tea. And you know there aren't half enough strawberries to go around. It is only a three-minutes' walk to the grocery, however, and Tom sets off like a rocket, and you are so pleased with his celerity and ready good nature that you want to run after him and kiss him. He is gone a long time, however. Ten minutes become fifteen, fifteen grow into twenty, the twenty swell into the half hour, and your guests exchange very significant glances as the half becomes three-quarters. Your boy returns at last,—apprehension in his downcast eyes, humility in his laggard step, penitence in the appealing slouch of his battered hat, and a pound and a half of shingle nails in his hands.

"Mother," he says, "what else was it you told me to get besides the nails?" And while you are counting your scanty store of berries to make them go round without a fraction, you hear Tom out in the back yard whistling and hammering away, building a dog-house with the nails you never told him to get.

Poor Tom, he loves at this age quite as ardently as he makes mistakes and mischief. And he is repulsed quite as ardently as he makes love. If he hugs his sister, he musses her ruffle, and gets cuffed for it. Two hours later another boy, not more than twenty-two or twenty-three years older than Tom, some neighbor's Tom, will come in, and will just make the most hopeless, terrible, chaotic wreck of that ruffle that lace can be distorted into. And the only reproof he gets is the reproachful murmur, "Must go so soon?" when he doesn't make a move to go until he hears the alarm clock up-stairs and the old gentleman in the adjoining room banging around building the morning fires, and loudly wondering if young Mr. Bostwick is going to stay to breakfast.

Tom is at this age set in deadly enmity against "company", which he soon learns to regard as his mortal foe. He regards "company" as a mysterious and eminently respectable delegation that always stays to dinner, invariably crowds him to the second table, never leaves him any of the pie, and usually makes him late for school. Naturally, he learns to love refined society, but in a conservative noncommittal sort of way, dissembling his love so effectually that even his parents never dream of its existence until it is gone.

Tom's life is not all comedy in the happy days of boyhood. Sometimes, after a troubled day at school, where he has had conflicts with teachers and books, and other boys, he comes home in the eventide with joyous anticipations—home, a sure refuge for him; home, where love, with many caresses, will make up for all his troubles. He isn't in the house ten minutes before somebody "tells on him". It doesn't make much difference what you tell on a boy; most anything hits him somewhere. He can't dodge everything when it rains "informations". The boy comes galloping home, empty as a drum, hungrier than a shark, and with an appetite like an ostrich. He hears his father's voice, gentle, patient, firm, calling, "Thomas!" Well, that gives the boy cold feet. When his father says "Tom", he knows the barometer is "set fair". When he says "Thomas", the boy is at once aware that the investigating committee is in session, with power to send for persons, and to act.

Tom goes before him wondering and apprehensive. "My son, what is that I hear about you to-day?" Well, Tom is no prophet. How can he tell what anybody has heard about him that day? It is all he can do to keep track of the thrilling incidents of his career. But, like most boys under the circumstances, Tom is a mighty good guesser. He can always guess what his father has been very likely to hear about if he isn't deaf and blind. When he guesses what it is, being a good honest boy, he owns up. When the average boy sees trouble coming down a narrow lane to meet him, and he can't run around either end, or get through the center, or crawl under, or climb over, he owns up. He makes a full and frank confession, to save the trouble and expense of a trial before a prejudiced court. Not being an infallible guesser, however, two or three times he "owns up" to the wrong thing—something his father hasn't heard a word about. Then he is in for two of them—one for the case the court had information about, and one for the one confessed. After one or two breaks of that kind the boy learns the wisdom of the serpent, and when next his father asks him what it is he has heard about him that day, Tom says, "If it please the court, I would rather hear the indictment read before I plead." It takes a little longer but it's safer for the defendant.

Sometimes when the tragedies of the day have been unusually painful; when, after the closing act wherein the boy's foes have been they of his own household, Tom, feeling that nobody in all the world loves him or cares for him; believing honestly that he is in everybody's way, has crawled off to his own room, and cried himself to sleep. For no one can feel a deeper pity for, or a tenderer sympathy with any one else, then a boy can entertain for himself, when he gives himself up to the luxury of personal woe. By and by, you, being the boy's mother, rise and gently steal away after him, sometimes, it may be, pausing at the sitting-room door to explain—as though the sweetest thing the mother ever does requires explanation or apology—that you are just going up to Tom's room to see that he is "tucked in nicely for the night." Tuck a boy in for the night! You can wrap and roll him up in quilt and blanket until he looks like a cocoon or a mummy, and then, the first time he turns over, there won't be a rag on the bed. You might as well try to tuck in a hound pup as a boy. He sleeps as actively as he plays ball.

He has earned his sleep. The curtain has fallen on one day's act in the drama of a boy's life. The restless feet that all day long have pattered and wandered so far—down dusty roads, over hot pavements, through long stretches of quiet wooded lanes, along the winding cattle paths in the deep silent woods; that have dabbled in the cool brook where it babbles and dimples over the shining pebbles, that have filled your house with noise and dust and racket, are still. The stained hand outside the sheet is soiled and rough, and the cut finger, with the rude bandage of the boy's own surgery, pleads with a mute effective pathos of its own for the mischievous hand that is never idle.

On the brown cheek the trace of a tear marks the piteous close of the day's troubles, the closing scene in a troubled little drama; trouble at school with books that were too many for him; trouble with temptations to have unlawful fun that were too strong for him, as they are frequently too strong for his father; trouble in the street with boys that were too big for him; at last, in his home, in his castle, his refuge, trouble has pursued him, until, feeling utterly friendless and in everybody's way, he crawled off to the dismantled den, dignified by the title of "the boy's room". His overcharged heart has welled up into his eyes, his waking breath has broken into a sob, and just as he begins to think that, after all, life is only one broad sea of troubles, whose restless billows, in never-ending succession, break and beat and double upon the short shore-line of a boy's life, he has drifted away into the wonderland of a boy's sleep, where fairy fingers picture his dreams.

How soundly, deeply, peacefully he sleeps! No mother, who has never dragged a sleepy boy off the lounge at nine o'clock, and hauled him off up-stairs to bed, can know with what a herculean grip a square sleep takes hold of a boy's senses, nor how fearfully and wonderfully limp and nerveless it makes him; nor how, in direct antagonism to all established laws of anatomy, it develops joints that work both ways, all the way up and down, before and behind that boy.

And what pen can portray the wonderful enchantments of a boy's dreamland! No marvelous visions wrought by the weird power of hashish, no dreams that come to the sleep of jaded woman or tired man, no ghastly specters that dance attendance upon cold mince pie, but shrink into stale and trifling commonplaces compared with the marvelous, the grotesque, the wonderful, the terrible, the beautiful and the enchanting scenes and people of a boy's dreamland. This may be owing, in a great measure, to the fact that the boy never relates his dream until all the members of the family have related theirs; and then he comes in, like a back county, with the necessary majority.

We love to go to the rooms where the "little people" sleep. We go there because, when the day is gone, when the twilight fades into night and the stars come out, when all the world is hushed and all the house is still, we remember, in that quiet moment, how cross we have been with the child, how unjust we have been; how many times the little ones have worried and fretted us. We may remember, too, how once, not because of anything worthy of sudden punishment the boy has done, but because some one else, too big for us to punish, even with an expression of resentment, had irritated the over-tense nerves, we struck the boy out of our way. And in this quiet of the night and the watching stars, we remember how we ourselves, wayward and perverse children that we are, have tempted and defied infinite love and measureless patience all along the way of that day's pilgrimage.

And somehow the bed where the little ones sleep transforms itself into a homely kind of altar. We love to kneel down beside their innocence and lift up our hearts to the great All-father and ask for the blessing of sleep. Not for the children—oh, no; they sleep well enough. The flossy heads just touch the pillow, and the little hearts go drifting out into the beautiful wonderland of childhood's dreams. They sleep well enough. We pray that the blessing of sleep may come down like the touch of God's caressing hand upon our own restless brains, our own troubled hearts, our own accusing consciences. We need to be hushed and lulled and soothed to sleep by the blessed promises upon which we pillow our sobbing hearts. The little children sleep well enough, for they are folded in the trustfulness of innocence. It is the "grown-up children," the children of many years, who have to be hushed to sleep every night by the love that is wider than all the seas and higher than the farthest star.

The boy's room! The room itself is a comically-pathetic appeal to the heart of mother or father. The boy's room—well, it is better than it used to be, I am glad to say, but it is not perfection yet. The mother protests. "It is a very nice room for a boy, and besides," she says, "the boy never goes into the room till after dark." That's right. The boy doesn't want to go into that room while he can see anything in it. If he did, he'd have a nightmare.

The mother says: "Well, it is small, but then we furnish it for him very nicely." Yes, we do; not. Furnish the boy's room nicely! We furnish it securely. We are not going to have his life risked by any untoward accident because of weak untried furniture. We give him furniture that has been carefully tested. It has been graduated from every room in the house, and has taken a postgraduate course in the kitchen. "Well," the mother says, "that is all right, because the boy kicks to pieces everything you put in there, anyhow." So he does, He thinks that is what his furniture is for, to kick to pieces. He sees everybody else has had a kick at it, so he goes in for a scrappy game with it, and makes his touch-down in the first half. There is no second half to his furniture. "Oh, well," some one says, "you don't understand boys. They don't care for nice things. Almost anything will do for a boy." Don't fool yourself, good mother. A boy does love nice things and pretty things. A boy has better taste, is more artistic, he has more correct ideas of the beautiful, the fair and the good than his sister. He proves this when he is married. Just look at the thing his sister marries! Don't you talk to me about that girl's superior taste!

I was in Cleveland, once upon a time, attending a meeting of the Boys' Y. M. C. A., for boys under eighteen down to little fellows of twelve. Well, one Christmas-time the ladies of the "West Side" gave the boys a loan exhibition of calendars. They had every room tapestried with calendars. Beautiful calendars, romantic calendars, sentimental calendars, warlike calendars, comic calendars, religious and commercial calendars—every sort of calendar. The last day of the exhibition they took a secret vote of the boys to select the picture they loved best. Of course everybody guessed what the boys would take—a bear hunt or a boat race, a sea-fight, something funny or heroic—something that we would say "appealed to boys".

With, I think, less than a dozen dissenting votes, the boys selected Raphael's *Madonna,* the last picture anybody guessed would be selected by boys at their very rough, rollicking, coltish age. But the helplessness and innocence and the sweetness of the little one in her arms; the look of universal mother-love in the Madonna face, caught the hearts of those boys, and that was their picture. They never would have done that if they had voted by holding up their hands. A boy is more sensitive in some heart matters than a girl, and he could never let you see down into the sentimental part of his heart—never; an open vote would have selected an Indian fight, a tiger hunt or the battle of Manila Bay.

What was the second choice? There is a picture —you have seen it repeated in lithograph a great many times—called *The Physician*. The scene is a poverty-stricken garret room; rough rafters showing; a rude little pallet made by turning two chairs together. On the bed lies a little girl. The physician, a man of about fifty, with grizzled beard, has turned the cheap paper shade on the lamp so as to focus all the light on the white little face. The parted lips tell of the fever that is devouring her. The little hand lies loosely over the side of the chair, just as the physician's fingers have let go of the wrist.

Standing in the shadow at the foot of the bed are a working-man and a woman. He is holding her in his arms, her head buried on his shoulder. You can hear the sobs that are shaking her figure. The man clasps her in his embrace, tenderly, lovingly, with all the comfort his heart and arms can give. So poor they are, they have nothing in this world but what they can carry into the other world—love. The man's eyes are turned in an agonizing question upon the face of the physician, whose look is bent upon the tiny charity patient, grave, earnest, anxious, as though he sat at the bedside of a queen. This scene of poverty, and sorrow, and love, and loyal devotion—this picture was the second choice of these boys. And all the funny and fighting pictures received only a few scattering votes. There is a little bit of womanish tenderness and sentiment in the heart of every boy. You see, his mother is a woman, and he has just a touch of her nature.

Give him a whole room for his very own. It isn't only the boy who suffers. The man, when he begins to prosper, builds a new house. His wife designs it, and gets two or three closets in every room. She says to the man, "Here, you have always complained that you never had any place to put your things about the house. Now, here is the biggest clothes closet in this house, eight feet wide, ten feet deep, twelve feet high, three rows of hooks on two sides, two rows of shelving, and a locker at the farther end. This is all for the man—there is nothing to go in there but the man's things!" Oh, how proud and rich you feel! That is Monday morning. By Saturday night you are lucky if you have one hook. If you complain about it, your wife says she "has to have *some* place for her things."

Let your boy help to furnish and decorate his own room. While he must have in it a great many things that we like, let him have a few things that he likes. It's his room. The treasures he brings home from field and wood and stream are more precious to him than the things that money can buy. But often, when we find these treasures in the boy's room, we throw them out of the window and tell him we don't want him to drag all the "trash" in the county into that room. Then we pile a lot of our own "trash" into it, because we have nowhere else to bestow it.

When you buy pictures for the boy, don't put him off with advertisement pictures that you try to put into an old looking-glass frame which never did fit anything. Buy him new pictures, especially appropriate to a boy's room. Have them framed down at the shop, as you do the pictures for the drawing-room and the hall. And let the boy go down and select one or two pictures all by himself. Don't you go with him. I know what you would do. You would say, "Now, dear, I don't want to influence you, but you must not buy this picture." "Well," the mother or the father says, "he is a boy; he is rough; he will buy something awful." Perhaps he may. Let him buy it. If the boy likes "rough" things, train him out of the liking for them gradually and sweetly, by giving him better things.

And I'm not so certain that what we call "rough" things are not a rather important part of a boy's education. I believe it's a good thing to have one or two good hard-fighting pictures in a boy's room. They will inspire him to give and take hard knocks. He must be a fighter himself if he amounts to anything in the world. He must learn courage. And he must learn that it will require the noblest, highest, most-enduring type of courage in all this world to enable him to fight against and to conquer the meanest, strongest, most treacherous, most persistent and relentless enemy he will ever encounter in this life—that is himself. The "fighting picture" need not make a slugger of the boy. It will probably save him from such a fate. The modern pugilist is not a fighter. He is a talker. All wars have been terrible. All wars have not been wicked. Napoleon Bonaparte was one soldier. George Washington was another.

Instead of the "fighting picture", we sometimes put into his room a work of art by "ma", a little thing she did herself, when she went to school. It is a picture of a flower, done in pastel, faded and blended with the touch of the years. The flower grows on a lightning-rod. A leaf on this side—a leaf on that side—leaf, leaf—leaf, leaf—and right on the tiptop of the rod, the flower. You couldn't break a petal off that chrysanthemum with a mallet and a cold-chisel. You can't hang it in the drawing-room, because people will ask what it is. And you are afraid to hang it in your own bedroom. You might wake up in the night and see it. So you put it in the boy's room. You tell him it's "pretty".

Get nice furnishings for the boy's room. When you get him a dressing-table, get him something handsome, with at least two legs of the same length. The boy would be satisfied with that, but usually the boy's table hasn't even one leg of the same length. Have an embroidered cover for it, such as his sister makes for some other fellow's table. His mother says, "That wouldn't do at all, because every time the boy washes his face you have to change the table cover." I know that. Every time the boy washes his face everything on that side of the room is soaking, sopping, dripping wet. With one exception—that's his face. That comes through dry-shod. He can use more water and wash less face than anything else on earth, except a cat.

When you get him a looking-glass, get him a fine mirror, plate-glass, with beveled edge, and an artistic frame. You ask the man for something real nice in the way of mirrors, and he shows you something like that. "This," he says, "will be ten dollars and a half, to you." "Oh," you say, "this is for a boy's room." "Oh," the man says. Now, that is all you say, and that is all the man says—you just say "Oh." There is no word in the English language that is capable of more variety of expression than the monosyllable "Oh."

The man knows just what you want. They carry them in special lines in the furniture stores, called "boy's mirrors". They come two hundred in a crate, a dollar and a half a crate. The frame looks as though it had some cutaneous disorder. The glass is blistered and corrugated and wrinkled like an old wash-board. The boy looks into it and is horrified. He discovers therein a half dozen sectional boys, with only one eye for the six of them. He comes down-stairs, and we say to him, "Go right back to your room and brush your hair. How dare you come down to breakfast with your hair standing around like a quarter-back's?" "Well," he says, "I did brush all the heads I could see!"

That is the room some boys grow up in. People wonder sometimes the boy has so little native refinement. The only wonder is that he has any.

The boy is growing. He enters the hobbledehoy stage of life. For a little season, during this period of transition, he does not belong to the human race. For he isn't a boy any longer; he isn't a man; he certainly isn't a woman or a girl. He is listed with the unclassified fauna of this planet. He is a little too tall for knickerbockers, and not quite old enough for long trousers. He is as awkward as he can be, before death. Whatever he picks up he drops and breaks. Whatever is too heavy for him to lift he steps on and breaks. And whatever is too big for him to step on he runs into and breaks.

And his voice is changing. You hear him in an adjoining room, singing, all by himself, a sad sweet song. And you anxiously call out, "What are you boys quarreling about, in there?" Sounds like half a dozen of him in a scrap. This is a boy's exclusive experience. Women know nothing about it. The boy's sister never passes through these bitter waters. From babyhood to womanhood she is gracious, and graceful, and dear. Even when she is a laughing happy girl of twelve, with no more shape than a bolster, we say she is as sweet as she ever will be. No, indeed. She will grow lovelier and sweeter, more lovable and more—er—huggable, so to speak, for many years after that.

And: His mother never cuts his hair again. Never. When Tom assumes the manly gown, she has looked her last upon his head, with trimming ideas. His hair will be trimmed and clipped, barberously it may be, but she will not be acscissory before the fact. She may sometimes long to have her boy kneel down before her, while she gnaws around his terrified locks with a pair of scissors that were sharpened when they were made; and have since then cut acres of calico, and miles of paper, and great stretches of cloth, and snarls and coils of string, and furlongs of lamp-wick; and have snuffed candles; and dug refractory corks out of the family "ink-bottle"; and punched holes in skate straps; and trimmed the family nails; and have done their level best, at the annual struggle, to cut stovepipe lengths in two; and have successfully opened oyster and fruit cans; and pried up carpet tacks; and have many a time gone snarling around Tom's head, and made him an object of terror to the children in the street, looking so much like a yearling colt that people have been afraid to approach him too suddenly, lest he should jump through his collar and run away.

He feels, too, the consciousness of another grand truth in the human economy. It dawns upon his intelligence that man's upper lip was designed by nature for a mustache pasture. How tenderly re-served he is when he is brooding over this discovery! With what exquisite caution are his primal investigations conducted. In his microscopical researches it appears to him that the down on his upper lip is certainly more determined down, more positive, more pronounced, more individual fuzz than that which vegetates in neglected tenderness upon his cheeks. He makes cautious explorations along the land of promise with the tip of his tenderest finger, delicately backing up the grade the wrong way, going always against the grain, that he may the more readily detect the slightest symptom of an uprising by the first feeling of velvety resistance.

And day by day he is more and more firmly convinced that there is in his lip the protoplasm of a glory that will, in its full development, eclipse even the majesty of his first tail-coat. And in the first dawning consciousness that the mustache is there, like the vote, and only needs to be brought out, how often Tom walks down to the barber shop, gazes longingly in at the window, and walks past. And how often, when he musters up sufficient courage to go in, and climbs into the chair, and is just on the point of huskily whispering to the barber that he would like a shave, the entrance of a man with a beard like Frederick Barbarossa's frightens away his resolution, and he has his hair cut again—the third time that week, and his hair is so short the barber has to part it with a straight-edge, and a scratch-awl. After that, he determines to shave himself, and surreptitiously obtains possession of the ancestral shaving machinery. His first shave is followed by a paternal investigation to discover "Who has been sharpening lead-pencils or opening sardine cans with my razor?" Nobody ever knows.

All that we know about it is, that Tom holds the razor in his hand about a minute, wondering what to do with it, before the blade falls across his fingers and cuts every one of them. First blood claimed and allowed, for the razor. Then he straps the razor furiously. Or, rather, he razors the strap. He slashes that passive instrument in as many directions as he can make motions with the razor. He would cut it oftener if the strap lasted longer. Then he nicks the razor against the side of the mug. Then he drops it on the floor and steps on it and nicks it again. They are small nicks, not so large by half as a saw-tooth, and he flatters himself his father will never see them. Next he soaks the razor in hot water, as he has seen his father do. Then he takes it out, at a temperature anywhere under nine hundred eighty degrees Fahrenheit, and lays it against his cheek, and raises a blister there the size of the razor, as he never saw his father do, but as his father most assuredly did, many, many years before Tom met him. Then he makes a variety of indescribable grimaces and labial contortions in a frenzied effort to get his upper lip into approachable shape, and, at last, the first offer he makes at his embryo mustache, he slashes his nose with a vicious uppercut. He gashes the corners of his mouth; wherever those nicks touch his cheek they leave a scratch apiece, and he learns what a good nick in a razor is for. When at last he lays the blood-stained weapon down, his gory lip looks as though it has just come out of a stubborn contest with a straw-cutter.

But he learns to shave, after a while—just before he cuts his lip clear off.

Tom is a big boy now. He is introduced, by young people of his own age, as "Mister". He scoffs at it, and likes it, not foreseeing the distant years when he will be heart-hungry for his old school nickname. He receives an invitation to a "party". He goes. He goes early. He runs nearly all the way for fear he may be "late to the party". Family isn't dressed when he gets there.

When he is ushered into the drawing-room there is nobdy there but chairs; all the chairs in the house, it seems to him. He is alone, and he can pick out the best and most comfortable one there, and sit in it all the evening. Instead of which, he picks out the meanest chair that was ever designed, an odd hall chair that got in by mistake; one of these things with a haircloth cushion that a fly couldn't cling to, and a back that is so straight it leans forward a little bit, and a big carved ornament in the middle of it that catches you right in the shoulder-blades. Then he braces his feet against the carpet and by some miracle manages to stay in that chair. After he gets in it money couldn't hire him to move. By and by the guests begin to arrive. He wants people to understand he is accustomed to these little social functions, and knows what to do with himself.

In order to look easy and unconscious, he piles one hand on top of the other. It doesn't fit, so he piles the other one on top. That fits worse than it did before, so he keeps trying on his hands, one after another. He wonders why hands didn't come in pairs instead of triplets. He could get along all right if it wasn't for the third hand. In course of time some lady comes along, as the crowd gets denser, and offers him a nice plate. He says, "No, thanks; no plate." She doesn't pay any attention to what he says. She puts the plate on his lap. He says to himself, "All right. If it stays on, all right; if it slips off on the floor, all right." He didn't ask for the old thing, and he isn't going to feel responsible for broken china in that house. Another lady comes along with a napkin and a tea-cup and saucer. Others bring rations of cake and pile them on the boy's plate.

You know the kind of place it is. You have suffered at it. One of those places where they pass refreshments around the room. Oh, woman!

That is no kind of a way to feed a grown man. Nature never designed man for that kind of a picnicking animal, anyhow. If she had, she would have built him that way. She would have made his knees broad and flat, like a beaver's tail. Then you would have a lap you could hold something on besides a ninety-pound girl. And even she won't stay on unless she is held. So I have been told. They give you a tiny plate, with cake and wafers on it, and a toy cup and saucer, and two lumps of sugar, and a doll's spoon, which you know will fall off by and by—and it does. There you stand—no place to sit down, and you are tired after your long day's work.

You can't let go of your tea-cup to eat your cake, and you can't let go of the cake to drink your tea. So you hold them there for fifteen minutes; then some kind-hearted woman says, "Sha'n't I relieve you?" and takes them away from you. And you wonder why they gave them to you. You can't hear a word that is said. Every time anybody comes along and asks, "Are you enjoying the evening?"—you say, in a dying tone, you are having a "very nice time." You don't remember when you had such a good time, except in the dentist's chair. And you look it.

Now, the boy hasn't enough nerve to decline anything, so they pile the cake high on his plate. All kinds of cake: loaf cake; soft squashy cake; layer cake. Layer cake! You take up a piece of it, and the roof comes off. Then you don't know whether you are expected to eat the "floor" or not. And there is one kind of cake—I don't know the name of it. I never heard it called any names, except by unhappy men who had eaten fragments of it under compulsion. It has this peculiar, soft, gaumy, sticky, fly-paper-like icing all over it. I don't know what you call it, but after you have eaten a piece you feel as though you had been fooling with the mucilage bottle. Ordinarily you are not a very conceited man, but that night you are "dead stuck on yourself".

Now, the boy doesn't want to eat anything, but he thinks Society expects it of him, and he eats patiently down to the bottom; and by and by he gets down to the wafers—wafers, you know, about as thick as window-glass, not quite so nutritious, and with just about as much taste in them. I don't know what the women make them for, except to serve at these little gatherings. Well, the boy gets down to the wafers. Up to this time you haven't paid the slightest attention to him. But just when he is loaded to the muzzle with these dry, crumby, dusty, brittle things, you stand before him and ask him if he is "enjoying the evening." Poor boy, he feels he must answer you right away, promptly; he blows a perfect geyser of crumbs half-way across the room; then he gives one shuddering gasp and chokes all the rest of the evening.

But he is young, he has a good constitution, and he is strong; he lives through it, and goes home alone. Didn't intend to go home alone when he went there—oh, no, indeed! He had another schedule. But when he reaches the end of the evening he feels faint and weak and cowardly. He sneaks out of the house without being observed, escapes and gets home unpursued. He doesn't even pause to tell his hostess, as his mother told him to be sure to do, that he has had "such a delightful evening," and he hopes he may be permitted to come again. But he feels better as he thinks it all over at home. He did have a good time. Alternately wretched and miserable and happy, discontented, humiliated, overjoyed he was all evening—but he liked it. He goes back to that house once, and again, and again, and yet again. Not for more cake—oh, no, he has had all the cake he wants.

He has discovered another kind of confectionery at that house, which is sweeter also than the honeycomb. Her name is Laura, or Helen, or something like that. And he goes to her home with two or three fellows; goes with half a dozen people; and at last he goes all by himself. After the most elaborate grooming he ever gave himself, he feels that he is dressed like a tramp. He has a half-defined impression that everything he has on is a size too small for any other man of his size; that his boots are a trifle snug, like a house with four rooms for a family of thirty-seven; that the hat which sits so lightly on the crown of his head is jaunty but limited, like a junior clerk's salary; that his gloves are a neat fit, and can't be buttoned with a stump machine. Tom doesn't know all this: he has only a general vague impression that it may be so. And he doesn't know that his sisters know every line of it. For he has lived many years longer, and got in ever so much more trouble, before he learns that one bright, good, sensible girl—and I believe they are all that—will see and notice more in a glance, remember it more accurately, and talk more about it, than twenty men can see in a week.

Tom does not know, for his crying feet will not let him, how he gets from his room to the earthly paradise where Laura lives. Nor does he know, after he gets there, that Laura sees him trying to rest one foot by setting it up on the heel. And she sees him sneak it back under his chair, and tilt it up on the toe for a change. She sees him fidget and fuss, she sees the look of anguish flitting across his face under the heartless deceitful veneering of smiles, and she makes the mental remark that Master Tom would feel much happier, and much more comfortable, and more like staying longer, if he had worn his fathers's boots.

But on his way to the house, despite the distraction of his crying feet, how many pleasant, really beautiful, romantic things Tom thinks up and recollects and compiles and composes to say to Laura, to impress her with his originality and wisdom and genius and bright exuberant fancy and general superiority over all the rest of Tom-kind. Real earnest things, you know; no hollow conventional compliments, or nonsense, but such things, Tom flatters himself, as none of the other fellows can or will say. And he has them all in beautiful order when he gets to the foot of the hill. The remark about the weather, to begin with; not the stereotyped old phrase, but a quaint, droll, humorous conceit that no one in the world but Tom could think of. Then, after the opening overture about the weather, something about music, and then something about art, and a profound thought or two on science and philosophy, and so on to poetry, and from poetry on an easy grade to "business".

But alas, when Tom reaches the gate, all these well-ordered ideas display evident symptoms of breaking up; as he crosses the yard, he is dismayed to know that they are in the convulsions of a panic, and when he touches the bell button every, each, all and several of the ideas, original and compiled, that he has had on any subject during the last ten years forsake him and return no more that evening.

When Laura welcomed him at the door, he had intended to say something real splendid about the imprisoned sunlight of something beaming out a welcome upon the what-you-may-call-it of the night or something. Instead of which he says, or rather gasps:

"Oh, yes, to be sure; to be sure; ho."

And then, conscious that he has not said anything particularly brilliant or original, or that most any of the other fellows could not say with a little practise, he adds, "Good morning!" And even this seems out of place at eight thirty P. M. Then he pulls himself together and asks, "How is your mother?" He is informed of "Ma's" well-being, and feeling that he has struck a conversational lead, he follows it a little deeper. "How is your father?" He is not greatly reassured by the information that "Pa is around and kicking." But he prospects a little further and asks, "How are your parents?" And then he finds that his lead was only a pocket, and that he has already exhausted his first topic of conversation.

He gets through the evening, though he never knows how. He hears his own voice, sounding far away. He sees Laura's face as in a mist, when he dares look at it. She says something about literature and he says he is reading "John Stuart Mill on the Floss." "Does he like it?" No, he doesn't read things he likes; he reads to feed his mind. "And does his mind require a great deal of feeding?" Then he wonders if she is laughing at him. By and by, sometime the same night, he looks at his watch again, and says it is time for him to go. But he doesn't go. He merely admits that it is time. Sits still for a long, long time after that. Doesn't say much, but thinks a great deal. After a while he says, "Well, really, I ought to go."

Now, that is encouraging. He ought to go. It shows the young man is thinking seriously upon the subject of going. His conscience is working on him —he "ought to go"; he is a young man of principle; when he feels he ought to do a thing, he is not the kind of man to shirk his duty, and as he "ought" to go, why, by and by he goes. He doesn't rush out of the house violently, like a man going to a fire, upsetting the furniture and scaring the cat. No, he walks across the room, and down the hall, with the slow, steady, deliberate, meditative, lingering tread of a man working by the day—for the city. When he gets out into the hall he runs into the hat-rack. He seems surprised to find there is a hat-rack there. He contemplates it for a long, long time. He says after a while, "Really, now, I must go." When you *must* do anything you do it.

He goes at last. Goes as far as the door this time, and gets hold of the door-knob—clutches it, as a drowning man grasps a life-line. Seems astonished to find there is a knob on the door—had never noticed one there before. He clings to it as though he had determined if any burglar came down the street and tried to steal that door-knob, he would have to drag his dead body through the key-hole before he got away with it. By and by he opens the door as wide as it will go. He would open it wider, but the wall is in his way. He holds it open there in the middle of December, as though his one great ambition in life was to cool off that house before he died. He cools it off; and the family is shivering to death in bed, when he finally manages to say a plain "Good night," such as you and I would say, whereas he intended to say a very sentimental, poetical good night. And as he goes down the steps he hears the door close behind him; he hears the key turn in the lock; he hears the chain shot into place, and he looks around to see what is the cause of all this haste, and the last light in the house has gloomed into darkness.

He has been there only five or six hours, and that was his first formal call. What he will do when he gets more familiar with the family and feels a little more at home nobody can guess. On his way home he feels what an utter fool he made of himself. Laura is not for him, and he will never think of her again. So he thinks of her all night. He thinks he was the awfulest ass that ever tried to entertain anybody. That girl will never want to see him again, never want to hear the dreary sound of his stupid voice—never; and he never will go back there again—never—never—never.

He goes back the next night. And many other nights. Until at last there comes the night of a thousand nights. When a kindly Providence keeps everybody else out of the way. When there is nobody there but Tom and Laura, and the furniture, and a lamp that turns down, and the starlight looking in through the half-curtained windows. When, without knowing how or why, they talk about life and its realities instead of the last concert or the next lecture; when they talk of their plans, their day-dreams and aspirations, and their ideals of real men and women; they talk about the heroes and heroines of days long gone by, gray and dim in the ages that are ever made young and new by the lives of noble men and noble women who never died in those grand old days, but lived and live on, as fadeless as the stars. When the room seems strangely silent if for a moment their voices hush; when the flush of earnestness upon her face gives it a tinge of sadness that makes it more beautiful than ever; when the dream of a home Eden, and home life, and home love, and a home-goddess with a face like Laura's, grows every moment more lovely, more entrancing to him, until at last poor, blundering, stupid Tom speaks without knowing what he is going to say, speaks without preparation or rehearsal, just speaks, and his honest manly heart touches his faltering lips with eloquence and tenderness and earnestness, that all the rhetoric in the world never did and never will inspire; and—That is all we know about it. Nobody knows what he says, or how he says it.

And when he goes away from her home that night, with the answer in his heart he had hoped and prayed for, although he knew he didn't deserve it, he goes out into that wondrous night a new man, into a new world. There are constellations in the sky he never saw before. It is a new world, and he is a new man, with new hopes and new aspirations, new ambitions and new purposes. His whole life is transformed by a woman's love. No wonder he walks home on the air, about ten feet up above the earth, which is the planet we inhabit, by permission of the trusts. Tom abides in this altitudinous condition of things for several days. He doesn't come down for his meals. Meals!

"Victuals!" Air is rich enough for his blood. A little atmosphere on a crystal salver is all he wants, three times a day. He lives on the essence of her name breathed into a "vawse".

But Laura brings him down to earth one evening when they are sitting down together, brings him down with a thud. She wants to know if he has said anything about this, by the way, to "Pa". Pa! Tom had forgotten there was such a creature on earth as Pa. It hasn't occurred to him that Pa had any connection with this circus at all. Now, he understands that Pa is the gentleman in the middle of the ring, with the long whip. He is the ring-master, who makes the animals and the performers go around. No, he hadn't said anything to Pa. He says he didn't think of it—he hasn't had time; he hasn't seen him; they were taking account of stock this week. No, he hasn't yet, but he will some time. There was no hurry about it—the old gentleman would last, wouldn't he, a few weeks longer?

Tom had not exactly, as you might say, poured out his heart to Pa. Somehow or other he had a rose-colored idea that the thing was going to go right along in this way forever. Tom had a thought that the program was all arranged, printed and distributed, rose-colored, gilt-edged and perfumed. He was going to sit and hold Laura's hands, and Pa was to stay down at the office, and Ma was to make her visits like angels'. But he sees, now that the matter has been referred to, that Pa is a grim necessity. And Laura doesn't like to see such a spasm of terror pass over Tom's face; and her lips quiver a little as she hides her flushed face out of sight on Tom's shoulder, and tells him how kind and tender Pa has always been with her, until Tom feels positively jealous of him. And she tells him that he must not dread going to see Pa, for Pa will be, oh, so glad to know how happy, happy, happy he can make Pa's little girl. And as she talks of him—the hard-working, old-fashioned man, who loves his girls as though he were yet only a big boy—her heart grows tenderer, and she speaks so eloquently that Tom, at first savagely jealous of him, is persuaded to fall in love with the old gentleman—he calls him "Pa", too. "Why," he says, "I'm not afraid of your father. For that matter, I'm not afraid of any man that ever walked on buffalo-grass. I will go and see him now if you want me to." No, not right now; she thinks it isn't necessary right now, but sometime soon. He will go down to-morrow afternoon—and he does.

He commits to memory a beautiful speech, an impressive, persuasive, convincing speech. He walks right down to the private office at the end of the store where it says "No Admittance" on the glass door. He opens the door and walks right up to the old man sitting at the desk, and looks him right in the eye, bold as a sheep. The old gentleman lifts his head and looks Tom in the eye. Once. Just once. That is enough. Tom takes the count after that. He wasn't sure whether the old man looked him in the eye or poked him in the eye. It has the same effect on him; it knocks his speech endwise.

By and by he starts in the middle of a sentence and says it both ways, leaves out all the verbs and forgets all the substantives. But he gets through alive, and he tells Laura that night—oh, he says, if she could only have heard what he said to her father! He walked right up to him, and he wishes he could remember the speech he made. If Daniel Webster could have heard that speech he would have turned over in his grave. Likely he would—he would have come out of it with a brick. Only one man on earth could have understood what the boy was trying to say, and that happened to be the man he was talking to, and he understood him because he knew all the symptoms. He had been there himself, and a man never gets over it. But when you come to this crisis in your life, my son, don't you make up any speech for Pa. You wouldn't remember it if you did. Pa wouldn't be moved by it, hard-headed, solid, matter-of-fact man of business that he is. You get him alone first—that is the main thing. Tell him you would like to see him alone for a couple of minutes, if he has an hour or two to spare. Then he will know what you want right away.

He understands, when a young man of your age comes in at the busiest time of a busy day, and asks him for a private interview, that you are either going to ask him for his daughter or try to borrow money of him. It amounts to the same thing in the end. So he will be ready for you in either case. Oh, of course, if there are two or three sisters in the family, if I were you I would mention the name of the particular girl I was after. Because, if you leave it to Pa to select the member of his family that he thinks is best adapted to your needs and age, it will be just like him to offer you the old lady. You get her anyhow, son; you needn't worry about that.

Then you mustn't hurry the old man. We have an idea when a man gets about fifty years old that all the sentiment in his heart has been burned to ashes long years ago in the struggle for life, with the fierce competition in the market, and the contact with other keen fighting men. But sometimes, when the boy and the man stand and sit there, looking at each other, the counting-room, with the heavy shadows lurking in every corner, with its time-worn furnishings, with the scanty dash of sunlight breaking in through the dusty window, looks like an old painting; the beginning and finishing of a race: one man nearly ready to lay his armor off, glad to be so nearly and so safely through with the contest that Tom, in all his inexperience and with his enthusiasm and conceit of a young man, is just getting ready to run and fight, or fight and run, you never can tell which until he is through with it.

The old man, looking at Tom, and through him, and past him, without seeing him, feels his heart throb almost as quickly as does that of the young man before him. For, looking down a long vista of years bordered with roseate hopes and bright dreams and anticipations, he sees a tender face, radiant with smiles and kindled with blushes; he feels a soft hand drop into his own with its timid pressure; he sees the vision open, under the summer stars, down mossy hillsides, where the restless breezes, sighing through the rustling leaves, whisper their secret to the noisy katydids; strolling along winding paths, deep in the bending wild grass, down in the aisles of the dim old woods; loitering where the meadow brook sparkles over the white pebbles or murmurs around the great flat stepping-stones; lingering on the foot-bridge, while he gazes into eyes eloquent and tender in their silent love-light; up through the long pathway of years, flecked and checkered with sunshine and cloud, with storm and calm, through years of struggle, trial, sorrow, disappointment, out at last into the crowning beauty and benison of hard-won and well-deserved success, he sees now this second Laura, re-imaging in all her girlish grace and loveliness of face and figure, and echoing, in the music of her voice, her mother—just as her mother was, back in the dear, old, sun-crowned days, "When all the days were made of gold, and all the nights of silver," when Laura's mother was a "little girl," and Laura's father was a boy like Tom. And Pa, brushing "nothing" out of his eyes, tells Tom he'll think it over and see him again—oh, well—about nine o'clock next week.

And so they are duly and formally engaged; and the very first thing they do, they make the very sensible, though very uncommon resolution so to conduct themselves that no one will ever suspect it. And they succeed admirably. No one ever does suspect it. They come into church in time to hear the benediction—every time they come together. They shun all other people when church is dismissed, and are seen to go home alone the longest way. At picnics they are missed not more than fifty times a day, and are discovered sitting under a lone and silent tree, holding each other's hands, gazing into each other's eyes. They call this acting coldly toward each other. They do look as though they were trying to keep each other from freezing to death.

If, at sociable or festival, they are left alone in a dressing-room a second and a half, Laura emerges with her ruffles standing around like a railroad accident; and Tom has enough good complexion on his shoulder to go around a young ladies' seminary. When they drive out, they sit in a buggy with a seat eighteen inches wide, and there is two feet of unoccupied room at either end of it. Long years afterward, when they drive, a flat-car isn't too wide for them; and when they walk, you could drive a load of hay between them.

They come to me, sometimes, these light-hearted children, and say they are "the happiest people in all this world." And when I ask why this superlative felicity, they say they have been engaged for six weeks. Oh, well; they are happy, are as happy as children and birds and kittens know how to be. They have all the happiness they will hold, but they don't hold very much. Children between twenty and thirty have a very limited capacity for happiness. If I should pick out the happiest lovers I know, I wouldn't select the boy and girl, with the morning light shining on their faces, or the starlight gleaming in their eyes. I would choose your white-haired old grandfather, and your grandmother with the silver locks.

Some people say, "Oh, Grandma and Grandpa!—they are not sentimental. They are not at all lover-like. They are as matter-of-fact as the multiplication table." Yes, but don't you know these gray-haired old lovers can teach you that love is a rose that rarely unfolds to its perfection in the morning sunshine? It takes more than the laughing, singing, dancing months of your engagement to teach you what love is. It takes years of deep and wide life experiences. It takes years to learn and to understand each other's little infirmities of temper and disposition; years of sharing sorrow and heartache, as well as laughter and joy; years of bearing each other's burdens, years of life's woes and life's work, it takes to interweave two hearts so closely that every throb in one awakens an answering thought in the other. Love that has been tried by the wet fleece and by the dry; love that has been tested a thousand times in a thousand ways, and has never once faltered in its patience, in its loyalty, and its devotion. By and by, lover and sweetheart, you will love each other in that way—not this year, nor the next. But after many years, this blessing will come.

Then dawns the wedding-day. The wedding-day! Everybody about the house laughing, happy and bright—everybody singing and chatting, with one exception. Somebody cries. At every wedding you ever attended in your life somebody cried. You can hear her all through the ceremony—sniff, sniff, sniff! Sounds like somebody trying to make responses to the service with a cold in his head. And another thing: the person who is crying at the wedding is always somebody who is not being married. Every time. The people who are being married seem to stand it bravely.

Poor Ma, no wonder she cries, when she realizes what it means to her. Ma, with the thousand and one anxieties attendant on the great event in her daughter's life hidden away under her dear smiling face, away down under the glistening eyes, deep in the loving heart; Ma, hurrying here and fluttering there, in the intense excitement of something strangely made up of happiness and grief, of apprehension and hope; Ma, with her sudden disappearances and flushed reappearances, indicating struggles and triumphs in the turbulent world down-stairs; Ma, seeing that everything is going right, from kitchen to dressing-rooms; looking after everything and everybody, with her hands and heart just as full as they will hold, and more voices calling, "Ma", from every room in the house than you would think one hundred "Mas" could answer; Ma, with the quivering lip and glistening eyes, who has to be cheerful, and lively, and smiling; because, if, as she thinks of the dearest and best-loved of her little flock going away from her sheltering arms into the keeping of another heart, she lets the fear and sorrow cloud her eyes for one moment, she hears a reproachful whisper—"Oh-h, Ma!" How it all comes back to Laura, like the tender shadow of a dream, long years after the mother-love that shone in the quiet eyes has gone out in darkness in the dear old home; how sweetly the vision comes back to the bride when she is a mother!

And Pa—dear old "Dad", wandering about the house as though he were lost in his own home; blundering into rooms where he has no business, and getting himself repelled therefrom with hysterical shrieks and gigglings; Pa, who gets tired of people who laugh and chatter, and gets away from them for a little minute, hiding himself in an empty room, where he stands at the window by himself, and looks out, dreaming of his little girl going away today out of the old home into the new one.

Why, only yesterday she was a dimpled, dainty, white-robed baby girl, the lily blossom that brought the first music of baby cooing into his home; his little baby girl. Then a little girl in short dresses, with schoolgirl troubles and schoolgirl pleasures, but yet his little girl. And then an older little girl still—his comrade now, and companion—but still his little girl. He feels the caressing touch of her white arms about his neck, he hears her ringing laugh, he sees again the romping ways he loved so well—his little girl. Then an older "little girl", out of school, and into society, admired, beloved, and at last—

But this is as far as he cares to think. Because, somehow, his father heart sees in the flight of this, his first-born, by and by the flight of all the other fledglings of his flock. He thinks, when they all have mated and flown away, how empty and desolate the old home nest will seem. He thinks how, in the years to come, when his girls shall make other homes bright and beautiful with the music of their voices and the light of their faces, mother will sit sometimes in the old home, beside the empty cradle that rocked them all, tenderly singing once more, with quivering lips and faltering voice, the cradle songs that in the olden days brooded so tenderly over all their baby sleep, until at last the rising tears will choke the song, and the swaying cradle will stand still, silent and empty, and back over river and prairie, mountain and desert, from new homes in the newer lands, come drifting back into the old home and its silence the tender cadences of the songs the children used to sing at home. Come back again the murmured prayers from the whispering lips, rising like the incense of the evening sacrifice around the dear loving altar of the mother knees. Come back the snatches of their childish plays. Come back all the love and the beauty of their childhood, until the old home, bereft of its little ones, is blessed so tenderly with their memories.

Old and gray the absent children may be now, with other children clustering like olive plants about their knees, but to the mother love that goes out into the world with every one of us, they are "the children" still. Down to white-haired old age, in her letters to them, in her talk about them, in her prayers for them, on her loving lips and deep in her tender heart, they are her "boys" and her "girls".

We thank God it is so. We thank God for the human love that is so like the love divine, that when the great All-father would make His children understand the tenderness of His love, the only phrase He could put on the lips of His prophet was, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I." It is as though we could never understand the love of God if we had never known the love of a mother.

No wonder a man wants to be a boy again sometimes. No wonder that sometimes, amid the storms and conflicts, in all the troubles and toils of life, a man longs for just one little moment to go back to her, just to creep into her arms once more; once more to lean his head on the dearest, sweetest, tenderest pillow that ever a head with an ache, or a heart with a sorrow in it, rested itself upon, and for one happy moment cry away all the troubles and sorrows and disappointments of his manhood years. God pity him! He can't. Because maybe the mother love is gone. And, anyhow, he can't, because he is a man, and the troubles and sorrows of manhood are sorrows that you can't cry away in your mother's arms. You have to set your teeth and turn your face to the storm, and let it rain and drive against your face, because you are a man.

The boy won't always have the mother arms to run to, when somebody tramples on his heart or somebody hurts his feelings; when he is defeated and discrowned. That's a good thing for the boy to remember before he forgets it. And the mother—oh, her arms will ache, ache, ache a thousand times more with their emptiness than ever they did with the weight of a tousled head and the grimy face that came tear-stained to her for comfort. That is a good thing for the mother to remember before the boy grows up.

In conclusion, the young people have a final spasm of superhuman wisdom. They are going to keep house. They are going to get ready for housekeeping the first thing. They are going to have that house stocked from cellar to garret and back again, with everything they need for a whole year—everything in the market. Just as well, Tom says, to get everything at once and have it delivered right up at the house, as to spend five or six or ten or twenty years in stocking up a home, as his father did. And Laura thinks so, too, and she wonders that Tom, young as he is, should know so much more than his father. Tom wonders at this himself, and it puzzles him until he is forty-five or fifty years old, and has a young Tom of his own to advise him. So the young people make out this wonderful list of all the things they have to have, with the proper quantities and prices, so they won't outrun their little income —fifty cents' worth of flour; two dollars' worth of chewing-gum—little things like that. They revise this list until it is humanly complete.

Then, the first time they want anything to eat, they discover there isn't a knife or a fork or a plate or a spoon in the new house. And the first day the laundress comes, and the water is hot, and the clothes are all ready, it is discovered that there isn't a washtub nearer than the grocery. And further along in the day the discovery is made that while Tom has bought a clothes-line that will reach to the north pole and back, and then has to be coiled up a mile or two, there isn't a clothes-pin in the settlement. And, in the course of a week or two, Tom slowly awakens to the realization of the fact that he has only begun to get.

When the first meal is prepared in the little home—no, that is wrong. The first meal never is "prepared",—it is eaten raw—they take dinner with Ma. They'd starve to death the first month if it wasn't for Ma—her Ma—the one Tom makes jokes about.

The fact is, they have just begun to buy things. They live in the sweet buy and buy, long before they get to it. If Tom should live to be a hundred years old, they would think, just before he died, of some things they had wanted for seventy-five years, which Tom had always forgotten to get. He says, in extenuation of his fault, that he "can't remember ten thousand things every time he goes out of the house; he has something to do besides shopping and marketing." He is right. Five thousand are as many things as a married man can carry on his mind at one time. Some men have very poor memories, and can only remember one thousand things—and they must all be the same thing. Then sometimes they remember it. Tom goes on saying he "forgot" until he is ashamed to say it any more. It is such a puerile reason.

One day he comes home with a new excuse. He says he did order the things but the man forgot to fetch them up. I don't know whether you ought to call that a lie or not. It sounds like one—it is not absolute truth. But I don't know about this remark being a lie, because a lie is something that is calculated to deceive. That statement never deceives anybody—it is perfectly harmless. Young husband, never lie to your wife. Not only because it is mean, cruel, brutal, cowardly; but it is such a waste of talent. She knows you, backward and forward, she knows you in and out, round and round, crisscross, zigzag, and so on back to the place of beginning. She can tell you when you are telling her the straight honest truth, and when you are telling her big wicked "whacks," just as well by looking at your shoulder-blades as you go out of the door as she can when she looks you right in the eye. She knows you. And sometime, some day of mutual knowledge, you will know your little wife just as thoroughly and just as intuitively as she knows you to-day. But, by that time you will both of you have been in Heaven about two thousand years.

Day by day their oldest and best friend, old Time, comes along, and looks into the little home to see how the young people are getting along. He loves young people, because he sees what beautiful material they are of which to make the loveliest kind of old people; and if you give him half a chance, children, that is just what he will do with you, and he will do it beautifully. He has a little memorandum of things the young people need; he has thought of things you never have dreamed of, or would think of.

The first thing that old Time brings is a little prosperity—just enough to make your heart sing for gladness. You had that down in your little book. Then he has a little adversity. Just enough to put the soul into the song of the heart that it couldn't have without it. He brings just enough sunshine to make the roses and lilies blossom in your lives. You had that down, too, in your little book. Then he has written down for you once in a while some beautiful gray days. You don't love the gray days now. You want the sunshiny days, the roses and the carnations. Let me tell you, children, you will love the gray days just as well when they come. Some day, when the heart is wearied, when the eyes are hot and tired and dry with weeping, when the face is burned by the noonday sun, you will know how like a kiss of blessedness from Heaven comes the soft cool touch of the mist, creeping up out of the sea or coming down over the mountain, until it folds you in a little curtain of gray, soft as the wings of a dove, and shuts you in with peace and rest and hope, and the tenderness of God. Oh, you will thank God again and again for the gray days.

Old Time brings into the house, by and by, the cooing music of a baby voice. The baby! He puts tone and color and meaning into the home. Why, people come into your little home, and they look at the beautiful furniture. They don't say, "Did that table come over in the Mayflower?" Oh, no—it looks too slick and glossy and Grand Rapidsy for that. But one unemployed day the baby gets at it with the scissors and a tack-hammer. Then when people ask, "Did that lovely antique table come over in the Mayflower?" you reply, with a superior air, "Oh, no! That came over in the Ark."

So Time comes and goes, bringing memories and blessings. Sends a messenger, one day, to take young Tom to college, and when he goes away, he leaves a great aching quiet in the home, harder to endure than the noisiest noise any boy ever made. Time brings him home from college by and by, and with him a college yell that makes all the other noises he ever made in his life, all put together and megaphoned, sound in comparison like deep, profound, religious silence. And it makes life seem real and earnest to Tom, and brings the old laugh rippling over Laura's face, when they see old Tom's first mustache, budding into second life, on young Tom's face.

And still old Time comes on his rounds, bringing each year whiter frosts to scatter on the whitening mustache, and brighter gleams of silver to glint the brown of Laura's hair. Bringing the blessings of old age and a love-locked home to crown these commonplace, workaday, human lives, bristling with human faults, marred with human mistakes, scarred and seamed and rifted with human troubles, and crowned with the compassion that only perfection can send upon imperfection. Comes, with happy memories of the past, and quiet confidence for the future. Comes, with the changing scenes of day and night; comes, with the sunny peace and the backward dreams of age; comes, with December's drifting snows, and comes—just as often—with the perfumed roses of beautiful June. Comes, until one day, in the golden harvest-time, the eye of the old reaper rests upon old Tom, standing right in the line of the swath, amid the ripened grain. The sweep of the noiseless scythe, whose edge is never turned; Time passes on; old Tom steps aside, out of young Tom's way, and the mysterious beautiful cycle of a life, ending always where it begins, and beginning ever where it ends, is complete.

MY KINDERGARTEN OF FIFTY YEARS

FIRST—I will tell you of the Kindergarten itself. Second—Of the pupils: some of them you will know.

Third and last—Of the teachers: they will be familiar to you.

Of the three, this is the first. The Kindergarten.

What has started me off on Kindergartens was reading a circular that dropped out of this morning's mail, announcing the opening of a new kindergarten in our neighborhood, at which only children between the ages of three and six will be admitted. It appears to a blind observer—who is waiting his chance for a job in the mill—that this old world is growing more exclusive every year. Why should the teacher of this new Kindergarten limit the privileges of her school to such very young children? That is one of the fads of this freaky age. It is true, I believe, that the kindergarten as planned by

Froebel was designed for very young children. But then, Froebel did not live so long as I have—he died sixty years ago, and I am living yet. If he were here now he would know—because I would tell him so myself, if he didn't find it out in any other way—that the Kindergarten is a good school for children all the way from two years and younger up to seventy.

At any rate, I have been attending Kindergarten for almost seventy years and see no chance of promotion yet, and indeed, am in no great hurry to leave the school. I think I like it rather better the longer I attend. I find that is usually the case with the older pupils. I think the lessons become a little harder as we grow older—at least, until we get into the very advanced classes. But in the course of forty years a fellow—I am a Fellow of the Kindergarten, although a man of the masculine sex—it's a co-educational institution—learns how to study, don't you know? He marks the hard places and "bones" on them for review, so that he doesn't often —not more than two or three hundred times—make exactly the same mistake in the same paragraph.

It was a rather small school at the start. Still it had no competition; it was the only school in the neighborhood at that time, and there was no other neighborhood, and that was the only time there was. The Garden of Eden they called it then, or at least they do now, which is much the same thing—all except the advanced scholars in the higher class; they have a new name for it, which none of the youngsters can either spell or pronounce, but it means the same thing. There were but two pupils to begin with, and they hadn't much chance. They were grown-up children when they were born, so of course you couldn't expect very much of them; they were morally certain to make mistakes the first thing. A child who is born too old is always handicapped in this school. It is a dangerous thing to know it all, and all at once. It is a big load to carry, and the best way to learn how to carry it without spilling is to load up an ounce or two at a time—"line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little"—it's a slow sort of way and takes a whole lifetime for some pupils.

But the load is put on solidly in that way, and when the pack is "cinched" as it should be, a fellow can go to the end of the trail without losing a pound of it, except, of course, that portion of his load that he unpacks and throws away as fast as he finds it to be worthless. That's usually about one-half—well, say three-fourths of it. I have read in the Book that when a boy or girl from the Kindergarten is promoted to the High School he or she has to unload everything at the strait gate.

This school at Eden didn't last very long: broke up in a little while. A loafer came in from the street one day and made trouble. And there has never been a loafer in all the world from that day to this who was good for anything else or who ever did anything but make trouble. This beggar from outside came in with a short-cut curriculum; agreed to take the pupils and teach them in five minutes all they could learn by the old-fogy kindergarten methods in seventy years. Easy learning, too, easy as eating your dinner. This caught the kindergartners. Something easy, that was what they wanted. Been so ever since; "German in six easy lessons"; "Violin without a master"; "Earn sixty dollars and seventy-five cents per week at home". Anything of that sort catches the pupils every time. Works right along.

Since I've been going to school I've seen hundreds of the pupils every year drawn away from the old books by these short cuts. Fellow comes along and says: "Can't remember, eh? Shouldn't think you could, the way you're trying to learn. Take you five, maybe ten years to cultivate a memory at that rate. Now for five dollars a lesson I'll teach you a system in five lessons by which you can remember every date and important event in the history of the world, and every combination of figures between addition and cube root, longer than you live."

And the pupils I've seen spend money to "buy" a memory as you would an overcoat! Another peddler comes along: "Want to practise medicine? Well, it will take you four, maybe five years of the hardest kind of boning at this old dust-yard of a school; you come with me and I'll sell you a diploma, good anywhere, that'll cost you only ten or twelve weeks' loafing and a hundred dollars." First thing we know we have a doctor in the class. Another faker comes along; finds a boy who wants to be a preacher; can preach a little, but he would like to be a theologian. "All right," the faker says, "got a degree of D. D. right here in the desk; cost you fifty dollars and an old sermon." Boy gets it, frames it, and hangs it up in his study. Wears his D. D. around in public, proud as the crow with the peacock feather.

You might think these fellows would get a misfit sometime, but they never do—never. A fifty-dollar degree fits a fifty-dollar man like the paper on the wall. Same way with all the "short-cut" honors. The fakers are good tailors; they can—and to do them full justice, they do—make their wares to fit their customers every time. And one popular class of "instructors" in this line is the professors who teach short cuts to wealth. They do a free-dispensary business with war-price profits, and they also keep a finishing school in Canada for Americans, and in the United States for Canadians.

One trouble with these short-cut graduates is that they have to come back to the Kindergarten for final "exams." Somehow or other there is no getting out of that. All the diplomas, and certificates, and honors, and degrees at all the "short-cut" universities—the short cuts are always "universities"; the shorter the cut the more universally universal is the university—can't pass a pupil in the Kindergarten. Seems to be an old law in the school that when once a pupil enters it, even at a very early age, he is kept on the rolls until the time for his final examination.

And then the trouble is sure to begin; the crookedness and the wearisome length of the short cut are made apparent. For it is an old law of the Kindergarten that the pupils "shall walk in a straight way" and "make straight paths for their feet", and although it is known that experiments in short cuts have been going on for something like six or seven thousand years it turns out at every examination that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and the pupil who branches off that line to find a short cut to the end of it, has to make a "gooseneck" somewhere and come back again.

On this account, and on several thousand others, it is better and easier to remain in the Kindergarten and take the full course just as the teacher arranges it. It does seem a little slow sometimes, and we do try to hurry the teacher up a little. But somehow or other, while we in the Kindergarten plod along in the same old way, and the short-cut fellows with the elective courses go sky-rocketing and mortor-cycling past until they disappear away ahead of us, miles and miles, over the hills and down the valleys, and across the plains in clouds of dust and steam, and smoke and sparks, and thunders of "hurrahs", until our sighs can be heard all through the schoolroom because we are so hopelessly "slow", yet have we always observed one thing, among several others.

I have observed it six times. Always and always when we start to school one bright, crisp, bracing, winter morning with our new resolution books under our arms—just opened for that year's study—we shout as we meet one another, "Happy New Year!" A familiar voice chimes in, "Happy New Year!" and lo! the short-cut fellows, every one of them, just abreast of us! "Why," we say, "how long is the year in the Universal University of all Universities?" "Three hundred and sixty-five days," say the fellows. Just what it is in the Kindergarten, precisely. This puts us all in a musing mood that morning, so the school is unusually quiet. And being quiet we have a better look at Wisdom, and can see that our teacher is "more precious than rubies", that "all the things we can desire are not to be compared unto her"; we see that she holds "length of days in her right hand", so there is no need for us to be in a hurry.

I have a fancy that it is really pleasanter, too, in the Kindergarten than in college. I never went to college; maybe that's the reason it always looks to me like hard work—from the outside. There is always so much questioning, and upsetting, and contradicting, and proving going on. Everybody "wants to know, you know." Whereas in the Kindergarten if there comes along a lesson that we can't understand—and we have lots of them every year—why, we accept it and believe it just because the teacher says so. They call this childish, and say that much of our so-called study is child's play. Well, I guess that is true—at least, partly true. At any rate, it is easier to play at your work than it is to work at your play.

And I notice that as the pupils grow older they love the kindergarten studies more and more. I frequently see them with their Book even in playtime, old pupils who have been reading in the same Book for fifty or sixty years, still poring over the same old lessons. You would think they would have the Book by heart by that time. Well, some of them have; and they seem to love it more than any of the younger pupils who are just beginning it. The fact is, the less people study it the less they like it.

Now, I very rarely—almost never—in fact, I never did see a student—the students are in the higher classes, you know—pack away an algebra in his grip-sack for summer reading when he was going away on a little jaunt. I don't suppose you ever on the train saw a woman so intensely absorbed in the thrilling interest of the story of geometry beginning, "The three points in which any line cuts the sides of a triangle and the projections, from any point in the plane, of the vertices of the triangle on to the same line are six points in involution," that she abstractedly paid full fare for a half-fare boy. I suppose if you should ask the train-boy for a copy of *Davies' Legendre* he would fall down dead on the floor. But don't try it, thinking to secure peace and privacy on your journey thereby. The train-boy is quick to seize new ideas. He may pull it out of the pile on you. Then you would probably fall out of the window—which is absurd.

But this old Kindergarten Book you will see in the hands of the children long after every other book has lost its charm and changed its teaching, and has been banished from the library because it has become antiquated, and its facts have gone to the dust-heap, its theories have been exploded, its geography is a joke and its politics so dead they are offensive. It is the only Book they teach in the Kindergarten. The children begin to study it long before they can read or even speak plainly. And it's the last Book they lay down.

Oh, sometimes, that is to say, a great many times, eminent men, very wise and learned men —they themselves said so, and they ought to know—have tried to put the Book out of the school and introduce more practical, instructive, modern books containing better teaching; books which they wrote themselves especially to meet the need and supply the demand for just such books. But somehow or other the new books were too new; they smelled of varnish; the veneer kept cracking and peeling off; they were gorgeously bound, but some of the pages were printed upside down; and they were illustrated with nothing but full-length portraits of the author in various attitudes admiring himself; and the author wrote the answers to his problems first and then tried to make the problems fit the answers without working them out, so that very often he guessed wrong, and that confused and perplexed the children and made their heads ache. So they always went back to the old Book, and read in one of their lessons therein that "Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh," and that the "whole matter" of education consisted in learning one very short lesson: "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

And little, short, easy-appearing lesson as it is, unless you have been to the Kindergarten yourself, you wouldn't believe how hard it is. I have known it to cost years, and trouble, and disappointment and sorrow, and grievous punishment, headache and heartache, groans and tears, until the page was so stained and blistered that the gray-haired child couldn't have read the lesson had it not been burned on the heart. It is a pleasant school, this Kindergarten, but it isn't an easy one. I don't know about college and football being so much harder, after all.

And now the pupils?

II

It is pleasant, as one's years in the Kindergarten wane into the afternoon, to turn over the pages of Memory's album and look once more upon the faces of the children now scattered here and there in the several departments of the old school, or who have been graduated and sent on higher.

Of course, you remember little Minnie Tulait, the tardy scholar? Poor little girl! She never left home until she heard the bell ring; then she ran all the way and came bursting into the schoolroom out of breath, her bonnet hanging down her back, lid off her lunch basket and a rip in her book bag, just after her name had been called and a tardy mark put down against her. Then she cried her eyes out and came just about as late the next day. She rushed into chapel just as the text had been read, got to the picnic after dinner, and reached the door at recess just in time to turn around and go back to her seat.

When she grew to be a big girl she married one of the boys in school—Bee Heindand—and was married in her school gown because her wedding-dress wasn't finished. Bee was a good boy; he met Minnie frequently when they were both trying to catch up. He always studied yesterday's lesson to-day, and was so far behind the rest of his own fellows that a visitor never could tell whether he was at the foot of the class ahead or at the head of the one behind. When at last Bee got into one of the upper classes he went into politics because the Ship of State must have a rudder, and he was just the man for the place. But when I last saw him he was the "log-chip", trailing at the end of the log-line, two hundred fathoms behind the rudder.

And the timid scholars who used to huddle together! The Fraid-Cats and the Faint-Hearts—lots of them used to come to school from Lonesome Hollow and Aspen Grove, and out that way. They were always in a condition of semi-distraction. Whenever a door opened suddenly they started, looked fearsomely over their shoulders, and huddled closer together. Whenever a boy was called up for a "birching" they turned white, and when the boy howled, Minerva Symptoms and the other girls cried. No matter who was punished, nor for what, these tender-hearted ones suffered more than did the boy who was leaping and shrieking under the scourge. The rest of us knew that, as a rule, the louder the culprit yelled and the higher he leaped the less was he hurt. Consequently we didn't have much sympathy for the noisy sufferer. The fellow who wanted to show us his welts and bruises at recess, and told us how much it hurt and how hard the teacher had laid it on, made us weary.

Sometimes this weeper came whining and sniffling to a boy who had raw wales under his shirt that hadn't healed for years, and who never said a word about them. Only once in a while, when he flinched at some of our rough play, did he show that he had a raw spot somewhere. And oftener there were girls who hid their aches, and laughed and sang when their hearts were breaking and never asked for sympathy.

These sufferers we loved and admired, when by some accident we found them out. But the howler was a wearisome creature, who would remember a toothache for twenty years, and tell about it every day if he could find anybody to listen to him. I think it was that way in our school ever since it was founded; the martyr who went around whining and begging for sympathy never got any, and the boy or girl who took the scourging with clenched teeth and set lips, and then went away to cry it out alone, found tender faces, gentle words, warm hearts and helping hands waiting for them when they came back with the tear-stains washed away.

When we healthy, shouting, romping pupils played a little too roughly with the gentle-hearted ones, they never slapped back. All they asked of the rest of the school was to be let alone in their own quiet corner of the playground. Sometimes, when they were carried away by the contagion of some very unusual exhilaration, they rushed madly into a game of "tag"; and once, it is told in the traditions of the school, they played "crack the whip". But little Timmy Dolesome got cracked off into a tree-box, and sprained his wrist and tore his jacket down the back, and they never played such a rough game again. But it was something to be remembered, and to be told in the twilight, long years after, like a ghost story.

With all their timidity it was noticed by everybody that they were the calmest pupils in the room the day we thought the schoolhouse was on fire and bound to burn down. One of the youngest pupils in the primary department, while reading the lesson carefully, discovered that what we had always thought was a comma was nothing but a fly speck. The announcement of this discovery created such a smoke that for some time we couldn't see the windows, and we could distinctly feel the everlasting foundations giving way under the schoolhouse. Amid all the clamor, and shouting, and wailing, the timid ones sat in their places, soothing the younger children about them and quietly reading their lessons.

When the tumult was quieted, and we all settled back to our work and found that the "Reader" said just what it had been saying for several thousand years, the only pupils who did not assemble on the platform and tell what they thought when they saw it coming, and how they felt, and what they said, and what they would have done if it had lasted ten minutes longer, were these pupils from Aspen Grove.

All the pupils in the Kindergarten were not nearly so bright as yourself—oh, no! There were some boys and girls, I remember, who had to be taught the same thing more than a hundred times. You could count on their coming up at every review to fail on the same lessons. Their books were a sight; dog-eared and thumbed, blistered with tears and dingy with finger-marks. Some of the lessons were cried over until you could hardly read the lines. There were all sorts of marks on the margin to help the stupid learner to remember. They would write the answers on their cuffs, and ink the figures on their thumb nails for "pointers". No good. They either forgot to look at the marks, or else couldn't remember what the figures meant. "Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little."

We used to lose all patience with them because it seemed to us they kept the class back, and lowered our average so that we didn't show up well on exhibition days. The majority of the class wanted them expelled or put back into the lower classes. But somehow the Teacher seemed unusually patient and gentle with those pupils.

There was one boy, named Thomas Something, who had to have everything explained and proved to him so clearly that a baby could understand it before he would believe it. And another one, Somebody Peter, who appeared to be as full of blunders as a cactus is of prickles. They were kept in the class, for all their blundering and stupid ways, although a great many of the wiser and brighter pupils predicted that such lax discipline would break up the school. But it didn't. And a great many years ago, when the school was several thousand years younger than it now is, one of the pupils named David got to thinking about the discipline of the school one day, and wrote, as a result of his investigation, that if the Teacher should mark demerits there wouldn't be a pupil left in the school to miss a lesson. Said it somewhat that way in a song which he thought he wrote at the time, but which some very wise pupils afterward explained he didn't write until he had been dead eight hundred years, and then got somebody else to write it for him.

Worse off than the stupid fellows, who kept on studying the harder the oftener they missed, was the poor fellow who stopped when he failed the first time. Gave right up; said there was no use trying, and didn't try any more. Had been getting along first-rate, you know; got good marks, learned easily, and seemed to hold on to what he learned.

But at last one day there came the hard one that lurks somewhere in the pages of the Book for every one of us; a tough lesson which the old heads had cried over in their time; a page that was blurred with the tears of generations of pupils; lines that were hard to scan and harder to construe. And when he stumbled on this one, and couldn't learn it right away, Hadda Nuff shut his book with a slam, got up from his desk, and said he wouldn't study any more if that was the way they were going to make a fellow "bone". Said the Book had no sense in it, anyhow; declared that all the answers in it were wrong, and went straight away to a "Short-Cut University of All Universal Universities," that guaranteed him a dead-sure thing on his diploma when he was matriculated. Whenever you heard a boy or girl slap a book down on the desk and cry out, "This is a hard saying," you knew somebody was going to leave school. You see, there was always an idea that if you didn't read the Book you would never have to learn the lessons that were in it.

We can never forget the Sneaks who were in the old school in our time, can we? Used to sit away back in the last row where they could see the whole school, watch the rest of us like cats, and tell on us whenever they caught us playing in school hours, whispering during prayer, or throwing paper wads against the ceiling. We would get found out some time, anyhow, but it made us detest the whole tribe of Sneaks none the less. They were nearly all cross-eyed; you never could tell what they were looking at. They were well enough behaved themselves—not because they were well bred, but because they were willing to endure anything for the sweet reward of catching somebody else in mischief and telling on the culprit.

It was once rumored that an organization of the pupils was contemplated by means of which all faults were to be eliminated from the school, and everybody was to be made good and happy. For weeks while this talk was going on, and everybody was eager and enthusiastic and excited over the plan, the Sneaks pined away and sulked; they turned their faces to the wall, refused food, and would not be comforted. But happily for them, one day one of the best girls in school—she was president of the new society of "The Fraterosis of Emancipated Woman"—in a superhuman effort to keep one good resolution all day, broke half a dozen better ones, and the Sneaks brightened up—for they caught her every time—and were cheerful and happy all the rest of the term. They thrived on other people's stumblings. They utilized your mistakes for their chewing-gum. They came of an old family, and dated back to the Garden of Eden, where their ancestor was the next settler after Adam and Eve. He settled them, too. "Should I not say 'those two'?" No, daughter, I shouldn't; I mean just what I say—"them, too."

And the Bullies in the school. I guess there will always be bullies in all schools. There were some mean ones in the kindergarten. The boy bully was always a coward, of course; a bit of a sneak as well, cringing to the big boys and brutal to the little ones. In the presence of the Teacher he was half crazed with terror, crying out, "What have I to do with thee?" But the weak pupil, whom he could handle, he mauled without mercy. It was his nature to be brutal. Rather than not have anything to worry he would torture a hog, even though he had to live with the animal to get at him.

And there was a girl bully in school at the same time. I knew her well,—tongue as sharp as a brier and tireless as a wolf. You couldn't look in her direction any time in the day without seeing some child within reach of her crying. She bullied you during prayers or other times when the school was unusually quiet, and you did not dare utter a sound. She was the girl who would jab a steel pen into your leg in class when the Teacher wasn't looking. The vicious poke brought tears into your eyes like a briny fountain.

Then the girl bully would look supernaturally good; she would put on the meekest countenance, arch her eyebrows in the most innocent surprise and say, "Why, whatever is the matter?" Then, if the weeping one would say, "You stuck that pen into me," the bully's eyes would open wider than ever, and she would say, in such sweet innocent astonishment, with two circumflex inflections, "M-e? M-e? Why, the idea! I never touched you!" And everybody in the class believed her except the Teacher and the pupils whom she had jabbed at other times, and the timid ones who saw her but were afraid to tell lest she should jab them at some convenient season.

And the lazy scholars, who did so little that they never had time to do anything; who were continually borrowing your books because their own were so much harder; they were always complaining that they "couldn't get a start". It would take an earthquake to start some of them, and the rest of them wanted a start that would last to the end of the journey.

And the poor scholars, who had to work their way through school, had no money to buy books, had no private coaches and no trots, and no time to play, and yet seemed to learn so much that wasn't in the books! There was a boy of this class in school when I was in the primary department. His name was Abraham Lincoln. His Latin would make you laugh; he had no Greek, and it must have been a circus to hear him read French.

But one day when somebody put dynamite under the schoolhouse, and we were sure it was going to be blown into Kingdom Come and part way back again, this boy took his place on the platform close by the Teacher's desk, and had everything straightened out while the rest of us were wringing our hands and creeping under the desks. Then he went into the High School and we never saw him again. And the good scholars! Well, if we begin to talk about them, people will think we have organized a mutual admiration society. But it was a good school, wasn't it? And it is a great deal better than it used to be, isn't it? And we learned as much in it as we have been able to carry around and use, didn't we?

III

It has often been urged against the very large schools that the instructors have little or no personal acquaintance with the pupils; that they merely lecture to great classes, and have nothing to do with the individual. But in the Kindergarten, although it was far and away the largest school in the world, and many of the oldest and wisest scholars said it had been overcrowded for years, the Teachers knew every one of the pupils, and gave to each member of the class private instruction, suited to the age and strength and intelligence of the learner. And this personal interest they retained even after the scholar had grown up and taken the degree of grandfather or grandmother. There never was a moment when a child could feel certain that the eye of one of the Teachers wasn't resting steadily upon him.

Why, it hasn't been a month since the Monitor came over into my end of the dormitory late one night, when everybody else was snoring like a November gale, and stopped at the side of my bed and said:

"Do you remember the day you hit poor little Feron Tremlin on the back of the neck with a great snowball, just because he ran for mayor on the Repemocratican ticket?"

"Yes," I said, "I remember all about it; I did hit him, but he—"

"I know he did," replied the Monitor, "but you knew you might just as well hit him with a sponge. You knew how soft-hearted he was. Turn that blanket down."

"But," I said, twisting that woven shield closely about my neck, "you've whipped me for that more than a hundred times."

"Yes, I know; and likely I'll whip you for it a hundred times more, unless you learn the lesson by heart. You don't half know it yet. Didn't I see you to-day tie Tinklin Cymbal's apron-strings to her slate frame, so that when she stood up to sing all her books went crashing to the floor?"

"Yes," I admitted, "but that was only for fun. Everybody laughed."

"And poor Cymbal cried," replied the Monitor. "You're too fond of fun that makes people cry. Turn down that blanket, and remember I'll give you thirty-nine for this every time my sister reminds me of it."

Saying which, he laid them on.

This sister of whom the Monitor spoke is a girl named Memory. She teaches the older pupils. She carries a memorandum-book with everybody's name in it. She used to come prowling about the dormitories at the most inconvenient hours, and wake her brother when he was sound asleep and as good as a corpse, not troubling anybody, and say to him: "Have you your knout handy? Come with me." And then she would tell on a fellow, and the Monitor would lay it on to him all the more savagely for being disturbed at such an unseemly hour. We could put the Monitor to sleep if Memory would keep out of the way. And yet I have read in the old traditions of the school that the longer he slept the worse he was when he awoke, and that it was not possible to keep him asleep forever. You might smother him for fifty years; then one day he would open his eyes suddenly, reach under his pillow for the cat-o'-nine-tails, braid a fresh scorpion into the cracker, stalk into the schoolroom, and walk right down the aisle to the very fellow who had drugged him.

I've known boys to go out and hang themselves, and girls to take Rough on Rats for the complexion, just to escape the Monitor's scourging after he had been asleep for fifteen or twenty years. He was a most pitiless tyrant. I've had him come to me when I wasn't at all fit for punishment, and order me to take off my jacket.

"But," I would say, "there isn't a sound place on my back now; this is the third time you have stood me up this week."

"Good!" he would say. "I'll let you have it on the raw this time!"

Which he did. When I would howl, "That's on the same place you hit before!" he would answer grimly, "That's all right; it's for the same thing."

Memory wasn't a mean girl at all, if you treated her fairly. She would tell on a fellow; there's no denying that. She was the girl with a kodak. She caught everything that was going on. She had charge of all the reviews, and, as I said, she taught only the older pupils. She would come to the dormitory sometimes, sit down on the side of your bed and say, "How are you on yesterday's lessons?" And then you would run them over together. Yesterday, in that school, meant any time the other side of to-day, whether it was a day or fifty years ago. She would open her album and look over the pictures with you—the most beautiful pictures you ever saw; and such a variety of sketches. There were gray days, with the mists creeping up from the meadows and a great fog-bank coming in from the sea; there were days when the slanting rain swept down, and bright sunny days—nobody in the world could equal her in painting sunshine.

And she could paint sound, too, so when you looked at the picture you could hear voices that you hadn't heard for years and years; voices of children that had left the school long, long ago; fragments of old songs and strains of sweet music that melted your heart. She was just like other girls—the older you grew and the fewer friends you had left, the poorer you became, the oftener she came and sat beside you, the more tenderly she spoke, and the fairer were the pictures she painted for you. Then little by little she subdued any garish tints in the pictures; anything that used to make your heart bitter and sour she painted over until it became so dim that you could hardly recognize it; even the gray days she made beautiful.

There was an outside Teacher who used to look after the pupils who ran away to go to the easier schools where they could do as they pleased. Whether they intended to enter his school or not they always did, because he occupied about all the ground adjacent to the Kindergarten.

The old fellow's name was Experience. He had just about as much conscience as a pistol. He carried a long goad, with a brad in the end of it that would bring tears to the eye of Cleopatra's needle. He had a set of rules about six or seven thousand years old. He never compelled a fellow to obey him, so that at first his discipline appeared to be very lax, and easier than a holiday. He posted the rules up where all of the pupils could see them and then said:

"Now, do just as you please in this school; rejoice in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things—"

And by and by, after you had stepped over the mark scores of times, and gone outside of bounds oftener than you could remember, and had gone around the hills to avoid a hard climb, the first thing you knew he was standing right in the path before you.

He never smiled; he just turned you around and walked you back; never argued; never explained; never scolded; just walked you straight back to the old school, with never a throb of pity and never a word of censure; he never said, "I told you so." If you threatened to leave his school he only replied, "Let's see you." He had no respect for anybody. I have seen him prodding a millionaire and a beggar along the same path with the same goad. Once he was making a boy who had run away from the Kindergarten, sign a receipt for a quarter's tuition in his school. "Sign here," he said. The boy was one of the richest pupils in the school—so rich that he was on the point of tearing down his barns to build greater; so rich that he wasn't going to work any more, nor go to school any longer, because he couldn't spend all his money if he threw it away all the rest of his lifetime. "Sign right here," said old Experience, and that fellow had to sign his name, "F-o-o-l—Fool," right at the bottom of the page.

And his bills are something terrific. The Kindergarten is free, of course, but I know one boy who paid Experience two hundred thousand dollars for a five-years' course, and when he got through he said he hadn't learned one solitary thing that he wasn't trying—harder than he ever tried to do anything else in his life—just to forget. There are very few children who get through the Kindergarten without taking at least one short course with old Experience.

One thing that the older pupils will tell you—and it is hard for the younger children to believe—is that no matter how preoccupied the Teacher appears to be, nor how much anarchy, and misconduct, and injustice, and bullying, and disorder he seems to permit in the schoolroom, he sees everything that goes on, and sees it all the time. Sometimes the record is not read out in the school, maybe until the events have been over and the class dismissed for a hundred years or more.

There was some comfort in the certainty that in time everything would have its right name in the records of the school, and every fellow would be correctly drawn; wrongs would be righted and justice would be done. It was a little "worrisome" at times, when you reflected that your own record was just as carefully and truthfully written as the others. But that should have had the effect of keeping you very careful about your record while you were making it. Yet there have been instances where pupils have wrought and schemed every day they were in the school to make a record that would read like blank verse as they read it themselves, which in one short day after they left would be flatly contradicted by the chronicle in the book. I used to think that was one reason why some of the pupils hated so to leave the school.

About seventy years is the allotted time for completing the full course in the Kindergarten, although there is no certainty just how long anybody will remain in the school. At the end of one's term the pupil is taken out and sent on to the High School. This makes little gaps in the school here and there which at first strike you with more or less sadness, but as you become once more absorbed in your own work you scarcely notice the vacant places unless they are close to you. There is something very pathetic in the dog-eared book, lying on the desk next your own, with the dust gathering upon it. In a few days you ask about it, and you are told that that scholar is not coming back.

It may possibly happen that you will be the last one of your class to be called up for promotion, and in that case the schoolroom, though it be crowded to the doors, becomes a very lonesome place to you, unless you have kept in very close touch with the younger classes. You see, the children did not know any of the scholars about whom you are fond of talking, and they tire of hearing you tell about people whom they never saw. They laugh at your obsolete pronunciations, and imitate your stilted reading; you hear them speak of you as a "back number"; you begin to wonder, after a while, if you have been forgotten. But that never happens.

They keep a Messenger at the school to notify the children when it is time to lay aside their books. He is very quiet, very soft-footed; he comes and goes so silently that no one hears him, and no one ever sees his face, save only the child to whom he speaks.

The Messenger will come one day and stop at your desk, whispering something to you which no one else will hear, and you will get up and go with him, without stopping to ask permission, for the Teacher sees him, and this is all understood. You may even go with him without pausing to say good-by to any of the pupils. And the next day the children will see your book on your desk, with your spectacles lying in the place where you were reading when the Messenger came for you. They will miss you for a few days—your desk will be pointed out for a little while to the new pupils—your sweet old-fashioned ways will be commented on very lovingly, if you have made yourself lovable. But if you have been disobliging and disagreeable they will laugh when they see your vacant chair, and say how glad they are that you are gone at last.

And one day a new scholar will come in and sit down at your desk, and brush all your old books out of the way. And the buzz and hum of the myriad voices, the laughing and crying, the singing and the quarreling, the work and the play, the meanness and the goodness, the loving and the hating, that are always going on in the great schoolroom, will drown all thought of you—save in the loving and loyal hearts that will never forget you—and the school will enter upon another term with new classes.

The Monitor will walk up and down the aisles; Memory will pause by this desk and that; the Recorder, silent as ever, will bend over his big book, as though he saw nothing instead of everything, writing down exactly what the pupil is, without making a single entry concerning what he seems to be; the Teacher, patient and gentle, will go on making the lessons as clear and plain as they can be made to stupid heads and unloving hearts; the unseen Messenger will stand in the door, selecting the next pupil for promotion, and the Kindergarten will go on for the next thousand years pretty much as it has gone on ever since the sun was born. Only, it will continue to be different from all other schools in one particular respect: It will have no Alumni Associations. None of the graduates ever comes back.

A MINUTE OF TIME

COLD and clear it was on the morning of January first, and the Jester, who had drawn his overcoat over his motley, bent himself against the blast that played with the jingling bells in his cap, and made his way to the lairs of those who sell diaries and calendars. His usually careless brow was furrowed with rather serious reflections, for he had found a flaw in the welding of one of his best and strongest Good Resolutions, young as the day was, and he was wondering what would become of the other nine by the time the sun went down. He paused before the oldest house in the world, the old established, ever reliable monopoly of Time, and read the familiar bulletin more than once before he entered the establishment.

"Retail dealer in Seconds, Minutes and Hours; sole manufacturer of Years and Centuries; all the Months furnished in Season; Seed-time looked after and Harvest supplied by reliable Dates; Rains supplied for all occasions; liberal reductions to Sunday-schools and Temperance picnics; Cold Storage for Yesterdays; Birthdays furnished; Teeth extracted while you wait; Wrinkles furnished to order. Step in and examine our assortment of Bald Heads before looking elsewhere; Eyes of all shades fitted to any grade of Spectacles; Anniversaries to order. Only house open all night and Sundays, all the Year round; all cash sales or long credit on gilt edge collateral; a salesman to every customer; nobody has to wait; you're next. Sole proprietor of the right to manufacture Calendars for the Solar System."

This seemed to be about the place the Jester was looking for. He entered and said to the Venerable Figure standing behind the counter, carefully adjusting the gage on a tiny hour-glass that had evidently been made for some happy child to play with a few days:

"A Happy New Year!"

Time nodded merrily, and the Jester went on:

"I am thinking about turning over a New Leaf this year."

Time laughed till the fragile little hour-glass shook in the strong old hands.

"Are you, indeed, my son?" he said. "I knew that; small need for you to come here with that information. I know more than that—I know you are going to turn over a New Leaf whether you are thinking about it or not. I can tell you more than that, too: the New Leaf is going to be turned over for you anyhow, without the slightest regard to your intentions, wishes or will; that is a thing we shall settle for you right here, my son, without troubling you in any manner concerning the transaction. You have come to the right shop; we will turn new pages for you every day this year, whether you will or no; what you write on them is your own concern. Here is your diary for this year—write a good record in it and God bless you—and now run along; other customers are crowding in, and there is no loafing allowed about this place."

But the Jester passed out slowly and listened to the busy old Chronologer, as he welcomed and sped the coming and going customers who thronged the establishment and kept the Hours and Minutes and other attendants moving all the time to attend to the wants of humanity.

A young man elbowed past the Jester, and as he spoke to the Maker of Calendars the Old Man called out:

"Here, Mr. Twenty-one! Have this young gentleman's birthday ready at once—stick half a dozen more hairs in his upper lip, eyebrow size—there you are, sir; call again in a few years and have your voice deepened. What can we do for you, sir? Want to look over the files for 1844, eh? All right; Mr. Used-to-be, show the gentleman the archives of Greene County for the nineteenth century. Wait on this lady, Mr. Stop-watch; what can we do for the lady? 'Your thirty-fourth birthday?' Certainly; right there on the second shelf from the top, Mr. Stop-watch; in that decorated box marked '49;' give the lady a few of these hair-line wrinkles for the corners of the eyes—no, no, we don't send them up; just lean over the counter and we'll fit them on for you, dear; there, that's lovely; there's a nice frosty kiss for you; come again one of these days and have your hair thinned.

A MINUTE OF TIME

"Good morning, sir, a Happy New Ye—Eh? 'You left a Yesterday with us about twenty-four hours ago?' Yes, that's right; we gave you a receipt; stamped it on your memory. 'And you would like it back again?' Sorry, my dear sir, very sorry, but it's against all the rules of the House. Never returned a man a Minute but once since the House was opened, and that was to a king named Hezekiah, more than two thousand years ago; didn't do him a bit of good, either; was as great a fool afterward as he was before; a little more of a fool, if anything. Your Yesterday is in the Cold Storage Warehouse, under bond; can show you some excellent views of it, if you'd like. There he goes; usually the case; when they want it back they don't want to look at it.

"Mr. Leisure—this way, a couple of Hours to go around the block with this Lazy Boy; charge them up against him—they'll never come back.

"What can we do for you, sir? 'You want time enough to atone for the foolishness and wickedness you have done during the last forty-one years'? Oh, well, you can have it, but you're in the wrong shop; go straight down the street until you come to the other House—right on the corner of Never and Forever—the House of Eternity—they'll fix you out there; we don't handle time in car lots at this House.

"Well, sir, don't crowd if you are in a hurry; there's plenty of time for everybody that doesn't want it all—what do you wish? Oh, you 'just want to know what time of day it is?' Well, friend, it's just about scalping-time, for you. Here, Mr. Midway, bring your scalping knife and fix this gentleman out for the orchestra chairs—bend your head a little bit forward, sir—I'll hold his ears out of the way, Mr. Midway, and—swish! slish! There you are, sir; if there are any flies on you next summer you'll know it before anybody else; come against next year and we'll let a V in your waistband.

"Good day to you, sir, what can we— Ah, yes; Mr. Sexaginta, this gentleman would like to know if 'he can go ahead and make arrangements for his seventy-fifth birthday?' Sorry, sir, but the bookkeeper tells me that we have a mortgage to foreclose about three months before your seventy-second; better put your house in order and take your papers down to the other House—we turn over all our unfinished business to them. Ha! ha!

"Here's something in your department, Mr. Fretanworry; this gentleman wants 'to be kicked into the middle of next week; has an acceptance falling due next Monday and doesn't know how to meet it;' all right, sir, we've got a Minute in your account somewhere that will send you clear into Eternity, if you—well, he's gone: when he found that he could get what he wanted, he didn't want it.

"And what is your business, young sir? Ah! yes, yes, yes; 'your father has left you fifty thousand dollars and you want Five Years to run over to Europe and see the world?' And you shall have them, young sir, you shall have them; just sign this judgment note for twenty years—that's right, and here are your Five Years—'Pretty stiff interest?' Well, we've been doing business at this stand for thousands of years, and we've dealt with young fellows like you before; we may compound the interest; can't tell yet—or, if you're a good boy and make wise use of the capital, we will not charge you any.

"What's here? A chubby-faced schoolboy, going home for the holidays; wants to know 'if I can't bring To-morrow along this Afternoon?' Not yet, little man; call around about forty years from now, and I'll rain To-morrows down on you so fast they'll take your breath away every time you open your mouth to shout 'Stop!'

"Who's this? A man with a danger-signal in his cheek, a cough like a minute gun in his lungs, and a fire in his veins—'wants another handful of sand for his hour-glass;' let me look at it, dear sir; too bad; just about run out, isn't it? And sand is scarce and high this year, and—ah! there goes the last grain—and just in the nick of time, my brother Death is backing his ambulance up at the door. Take him away to the other House, down the street; he has no more business with us.

"And what is your wish, sir? Oh! 'you are going to be hanged in the morning and would like a night six months long.' Sorry, good man, but we haven't changed the gage of the machine but once since I went into business; we did lengthen a day for Joshua, but then, you know, he wasn't going to be hanged. But never mind; the other House will furnish you a night as long as you want, immediately after the hanging; we send them a great deal of business, sir; oh! a very great deal of business, although they never reciprocate; no, indeed, we never get a customer from the other House.

"And here is a bright young fellow now who looks as though he might have a prospector's claim on the World and Time; and what do you want, my boy? Eh? Well, lean over and whisper it then, if you are so timid—ha, ha! I knew you didn't want a grizzled old graybeard like myself to wait on you; this way, Hope, dear; here's a young springal with all the blood that isn't in his heart burning in his cheeks at sight of you—he wants a thousand Promises, all in sunny tints; let him have them, dear; you'll find them loose in the big bin with the Rainbow clasps—let him have as many of them as he wants and charge them to him; he's good for them; bid him God-speed and give him a kiss, dear, that he will remember when he is a white-haired old man—God bless you, my boy!

"And now—ah, good afternoon, Grandpa; and what can we do for you this quiet winter day? Come over here where the sun shines through the south window. 'You would like to look at Yesterday a little while?' Certainly, Grandpa, certainly. Memory, dear, bring Grandpa the stereopticon; sit down by his side and turn the slides for him. Come hither, Wisdom, my quiet daughter; bring the powder-box with you—now sift it over him as he bends his head above the pictures your sister is showing him—gently, gently—a little more right here at his temples; don't let any of it get into his eyes; they are just the correct shade now, soft and tender as sunset; sprinkle it thickly on the top of his head—snow it down gently—gently—that's right; now on his beard; silver it; there is no snow falls so white and warm as that; that's the way—so softly that he doesn't notice it; there, there, that will do; there is a crown of glory and honor for you, Grandpa. And here is a nice stout stick with a handle that will just fit your old hand; lean hard upon it, as you have leaned upon the Promises all the days of your life; just one moment before you go—this way, Mr. Strongman, put the tremolo stop on Grandpa's knees, and bring that seventy-year-old stoop for his shoulders—now you may go, Grandpa; 'go out to the gate, through the city, and prepare your seat in the street; the young men will see you and hide themselves; the aged will arise, and stand up; princes will refrain from talking and the nobles will hold their peace; the ear that hears will bless you, and the eyes that see will give witness to you'; —ah, it makes the Day sweet and writes the Date in gold upon the Calendar when we finish a piece of work like that. 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom': ah, well—"

Just at this instant the gray eyes of the old Maker of Calendars fell upon the loitering Jester, and he shouted:

"What in the name of all the Centuries are you loitering around here for? Quick, Mr. Indiansummer! Bring your scalping knife and the Frost-sprayer! One of you Birthdays hand me a pair of spectacles and a cane—I'll fix this fellow out till he looks older than his youngest joke!"

But the terrified Jester, skipping nimbly down the crowded street, heard the voice of the old Chronologer, shouting in a key to be heard all around the world:

"All out for Nineteen Hundred and Past! Everybody change! All aboard for Nineteen Hundred and Next!"

FAVORITES

A DAY or two ago one mail brought me two letters, one from Ohio and one from Alabama. The letters, mailed on the same day, were twins by different parents. The Ohio man asked me to send him "my favorite text" in the Bible, and the girl in Alabama wanted me to tell her "my favorite poem." And I had to disappoint both of them.

For how do I know my favorite poem? A man of my age! Oh, there was a time when I had a favorite poem, and a favorite author, and a favorite friend. I am not going to tell you what my favorite poem was. "Because you would laugh at me?" Not by a long, long rope, oh, so ready young friend. But because I would laugh at it. And that would hurt your feelings. Not because it was my favorite poem, but because it is yours to-day. That's why I won't tell you.

I rather think the "favorite days" belong to youth. The judgment of youth is so much more nearly infallible, more "rapid fire and hair-triggery," so much clearer, stronger, than that of age. Well, if that sounds a little too strong, suppose we amend by striking out all after the "y" in "triggery." The house will accept the resolution as amended, without a division, I think. If I ask a venerable sage his favorite author, he has to pause and think a long time over a long, long list of lifelong friends who have sat with him through the experiences of half a century or more. He hesitates a great many times before he speaks, and then he speaks slowly and with many qualifications. But if I ask his grandchildren, the answers are as ready as crickets in harvest. It is a pleasant happy time of life. Not the happiest, pleasantest, or best time, but still, it is very delightful as all lifetime is.

Dear me! My first novel was *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Did I read it clear through? Well, I can remember one passage in it. On one occasion Thaddeus came near to getting into a scrap over some affront offered to his boots. Nothing came of it, however, and I made up my mind privately that Thaddeus was a chump, and saved my young life by declining to pursue the fortunes and misfortunes of the hero any farther. My sisters read it, however. They also, one of them at least, read *The Children of the Abbey,* also *The Wide, Wide World.* I did most emphatically not. I switched off on *Pilgrim's Progress*—the edition with the good old wood-cuts, and I think I have read it once a year ever since.

An aunt, having learned, from my dear mother's letters, no doubt, what an extraordinarily bright and exemplary boy I was before reaching my teens, sent me the *Memoir of John Looney Bead.* John was a holy terror. To me, at any rate. It is just as well that he died in his fifth year, after he had been preaching not longer, as I remember, than eighteen months, because if I had ever met that remarkable youth I think I would have had words with him, anyhow. I used to have to read him, Sundays, when—and it is difficult for me to see at this day how that ever happened—I had been bad. And I didn't, and don't, believe a word of that book. *Robinson Crusoe,* of course, I did, as do all right-minded boys. But then, that is a book anybody might easily believe.

Do you remember *The Berber,* old man? And *Moby Dick?* They came later, of course, but I just happened to think of them as my mind was running back over the books we read on the nursery side of thirteen. There was another book used to be laid upon me instead of the rod, when I had performed certain fantastic tricks before high Heaven when I was reasonably sure that nobody else was looking and Heaven wouldn't mind—or at least wouldn't tell on me. That was Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy*. Had to read it to my father, Sunday afternoons. Had my choice between that and a whipping. One afternoon, in a spirit of bravado and experiment, I chose the whipping. Got 'em both. And you old boys, of my own age, can imagine with what affectionate reverence I regard the name and memory of Martin Farquhar Tupper even unto this day.

But one day, a long summer afternoon, prowling about in the attic of an Illinois farm-house, I came upon an old hair trunk, locked, and full of books. You could smell the books. And the lock told what manner of books they were. It didn't take a boy long to unlock a panel in the bottom of that trunk, and I got out a promising-looking book with red covers. It was better than its promises—Wilkie Collins' *Crock of Gold.* Smoke of the pit! There was a book for you. I sat up in that room and read until the garret became so full of evening shadows I was afraid to move. You couldn't smooth my hair down with a currycomb. It might have broken off, but that was all; the stumps would bristle.

Since then I have read several creepy books. But they only crawled, in comparison with that one. I have never seen the book since. And I suppose I would laugh at it now. It was not only the story, but the boyhood; and the long dim room; the buzzing mud-wasps busy with their masonry in the rafters; the knowledge that I had no business with that book and would get a scolding with frills to it if anybody should catch me save my grandfather, who never scolded me himself nor permitted any one else to do so—that made the book what it seemed to be. Well, that horrible book was my "favorite" while I had hold of it. Or rather, while it had hold of me. But it isn't now.

And somebody gave me a "book for boys." You recall it, I guess. It was *Frank*. That was all; just *Frank*. He never had any other name. I think he had nothing but a front name and an uncle. Uncle had no name at all. He was just "uncle." An English book, of course—all our juveniles then were. "Frank" was a puzzle to me. I had never heard of a boy who remotely resembled any type of boy that would faintly remind you of something like him, at all. I really enjoyed the book, much as I enjoyed algebra, but it wearied me, trying to make out what manner of boy "Frank" could have been. I have never been able to decide whether he was nine, or nineteen, or ninety years old. There was a nine in his age, I think, and on some pages he was one, sometimes the other, and occasionally all three.

There was a colored servant in the book, named Mungo, I think. Perhaps there may have been a negro—though I think this one was a "blackamoor", whatever that is—named Mungo, but I never believed it. Don't yet. He spoke a mirth-provoking dialect. Not mirth-provoking because it was so funny, but because it wasn't funny a little bit.

But then after *Frank* came the Rollo Books. Blessed old Abbot! His name should be spelled with the single "t," and he deserves a halo for the Rollo Books. They were the earliest of American juveniles I can remember. Mr. Holiday was a sort of prig, and we made fun of his preaching habit, but the books were clean, wholesome, with a vein of pleasant easy instruction. I was a boy in long trousers when I first read a Rollo book. Which means that I was much younger and smaller than the small boy in knickerbockers to-day. I wore a tunic that looked like my sister's shirtwaist with a skirt to it. And I wore a cap. Helmet of Hector—what a cap! It went with the Rollo books. Rollo wears one just like it, in the pictures. It was a circular "mortarboard," with a visor. And a tassel. The prettiest tassel! Long; it hung down to touch my shoulder.

The first day I wore it to school a rude boy made no end of fun of it, and pulled it like a bell rope. I ran at him, pushed him with both hands, and he fell down. It was my first fight, and I was victorious. I ran crying to the teacher, cold with the fear that I had killed the boy. But I hadn't. He lived to make me wish that I had. Then after the Rollo books came the Franconia stories. But I think perhaps there were too many girls in them, and Beechnut never did measure up to Jonas.

Jonas was a demi-god. I think he stands as the prototype of Riley's Boy Lives on Our Farm. To read how Jonas straightened a nail by laying it on the edge of an ax and hammering it with a hatchet, was a revelation in the science of manual training. And when, finding that the smoke blew in his eyes, he built the fire on the other side of the log—that was little short of magic. When he "chocked" the wagon wheel with a stone—that was Napoleonic. And then when he drew from his pocket the very bit of twine that was needed—that was a miracle. With wonder I admire Edison. And the builder of the Corliss engine. And the architect of the Brooklyn Bridge. And the architects of the World's Fair—there never was but one.

But after all, Jonas stands in a class by himself. To this day, whenever a problem in domestic carpentry, or roofery, or locksmithing confronts me, there rises before me in my helplessness, as I set about to perform the task, the figure of little Rollo, with wondering eyes, and the ready-fingered Jonas, pulling "things" out of his inexhaustible pockets and doing with a nail, a piece of twine, and a bit of wire, what I am trying to do with a plumber's outfit, blacksmith's kit, and carpenter's tool-chest. Jonas was the father of all such as work in anything.

But how about my favorite book? Well; I don't know. Is it the one I read oftenest? I read Scott and Thackeray oftener than any other books on my shelves, but I'm not at all sure that they stand any higher in my favor than some others. It depends on my own mood, and the weather, and the wind, and circumstances, who my present "favorite" may be. To-day "I loaf, and invite myself" with a fellow who will grate on me to-morrow. Won't be his fault, I know, but I can't help that. I drop my work this morning to dream over a poem for which I shall have no use to-morrow.

To have a favorite poem, I find, is usually about as enduring as these marginal notes you read in the old-fashioned autograph albums—"Remember the day on the boat." Two years after that ink is dry, neither the owner of the album nor the writer of the memorial will have the slightest memory of the day or the boat, and they will jointly wonder to what the words referred.

Once upon a time, I, in the days when I had as much hair on my head as I have wrinkles on my face now, wrote in a girl's album, a verse of hand-stitched poetry, with a welt down the side for an acrostic, and on the corner of the page I wrote, "Lemons." How we laughed over that "Lemons." How we laughed! Oh, how we did laugh! It was too all-killingly funny for anything, and we never, never could forget that word and all that it called up in memory. "Lemons"—oh, ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, ho, ho, ho! "Lemons!" Years twice twenty have sped since then. I can see the page, and I can see "Lemons" written crisscross in the corner; I can hear our laughter—there were half a dozen of us giggling and ha-haing over it—and now, just for curiosity I would give a dollar if I could call up the faintest idea of the vaguest thing that "Lemons" refers to.

How happy it is to be young and giddy and a little bit soft, and pulpy, with a heart in tune for laughter in any key and any time, and a memory about as long as a sigh. And as the memory grows longer, life is dearer and better and brighter. When it gets to be about fifty years long—what a book it is! And you begin to think how blessed it will be when it has a thousand year-long pages. No, children, I have no favorite poem, and no favorite author. Not now. Used to have.

Everybody loves old books. The older the better. Children of five, and nine, and forty, and seventy years love best of all the stories with which they are most familiar. A man begins life with one book; the shelves expand up to a certain climax, then they begin to wane, until at last he goes out of life leaning upon one book—"the Book" he has learned to call it by that time, as though there was but one book in all the world of many books. For we love best —always we do—the book and the story which tells most about our own experiences. You know that, don't you?

When I was a boy, I was much given to entertaining a small audience of my brothers and sisters with narratives of our own lives, which I touched up with flesh tints, dark eyebrows, age-lines and wigs, as the dramatic exigencies and the taste of the audience demanded. And "Tell about the time the skiff upset in Kickapoo Creek," the "house" used to call, as the winter evening wore to a close, and it was about time for the curtain to fall. And they listened eagerly, because a part of the audience had been of the crew of the ill-fated craft, which careened and "turned turtle" at the very time the captain should have been in school. They listed to the story of how the captain swam ashore, and waded home with his telltale raiment soaking on his shivering frame, and how the blabbing boots "squish-squashed" on his feet as he walked into the house amid the unrehearsed chorus of, "He's been to the creek, and you told him not to!" They laughed with uncounterfeited glee as the narrator told with eloquent pantomime, how he had prepared to receive the punishment of the rod with forty stripes or so, plus as many more as the rod would stand, with his jacket on, and how, at the first whack, the soaking jacket had sent a cloud of blinding and chilling spray all over the executioner and the shrieking group of juvenile spectators, insomuch that the well-merited castigation broke up in a tumult of laughter and commiseration, and the culprit was promptly soused into a hot bath and rubbed down and fed on hot things, and coddled, and the story became a page in family history.

That's the way books are made. When the boy is gray-haired and the girl has locks of silver, these are the stories they love, the tales of yesterday—the real stories, that actually happened in the morning-time, when the world was young, and the day was new; when fairies were real, and ghosts were commoner than electric cars.

How much of your own life is a story! There isn't much theory about it. It isn't, as a rule, a "motive story". There are a few years of "moralizing" in it. Some happy days of sentiment. A few quiet starlit hours of reflection. Some joyous moons of romance and poesy, tender, and dear, and true. Some thrilling chapters of prophecy and hope and ambition. Now and then comes a sun-crowned day of rapture and exaltation. Once in a while a storm-swept day followed by a starless night. Now and then a day bitter with defeat—somewhere or other that chapter always comes in.

So every day the story you children are writing goes on and on. Every day there is action. Every day you do something; go somewhere; plan something; see somebody. You live, and you love, and you suffer. You lay careful plans and they work out perversely and wretchedly wrong. You build; then fire, or cyclone, or earthquake shock topples down the house of cards, smites into ruins the castle in Spain. And how the action in your story interests the readers! People who don't care a straw what you think or say, will lose a whole precious morning watching through a chink of a half-turned shutter slat, to see what you are "doing". You know that. People who don't want your moralizing, your sermonizing, your theorizing, are intensely interested in the action of your story as you develop it before them.

You don't care a cent what your most Christian neighbor thinks about cats. She would bore you to death if she should come over some day and give you her "views" on cats. But if you should see her come out of her house some morning when you were so busy you hadn't time to breathe, carrying a cat in one hand and a baseball bat in the other, you would drop book, broom, or sewing, and never leave the window until you knew what she was going to do—nay, until you knew what she had done with that cat. And when you told about it afterward, you would not go into a metaphysical investigation of her motives for dealing with the cat as she did. You would tell, with appropriate gesticulation and dramatic emphasis what you saw her do. Now, to make your life story interesting, you must put a great deal of action into it.

But I've nearly forgotten the man who is waiting to hear my favorite text. Well, that depends. When the day is raw and bleak and rainy, I want a cloak, warm and storm-proof, and I snuggle into it and draw it around me like a "garment of praise". When the day is bitter cold, the sunny side of a great rock, with the outlook to the south is my favorite, and "the Rock that is higher than I" is my shelter. When the way of the pilgrimage is dusty and hot, I love a shaded path close beside the windings of the river; I love to hear the murmur of "the fountain of living waters."

When I am hungry, a little passing shower of manna pleases me as well as anything, with the promise of the "hidden manna" in the day of overcoming. When I am filled—"the full soul loatheth the honeycomb," and a little exercise, such as climbing the Hill Difficulty or running with patience a hard sprint in the race that is set before me is good for me. When I am tired, I long for an arbor of rest—I want to "lie down in green pastures", until my soul is restored. Going down the dangerous slopes I want a pilgrim's staff upon which to lean. When there are giants in the way, I want a sword—"a right Jerusalem blade," and some One to "teach my fingers to fight."

FAVORITES

Sometimes I am faint-hearted and frightened, then I want a bugle blast that will stiffen the sinews of my soul, like the trumpet of Gideon. Then another day I have fallen among thieves, and I am sore hurt, and I need words that are healing balm. One time I need to be coaxed; the next day I have to be commanded. To-day I must be restrained and feel the pull of the rein and the grip of the curb. To-morrow I must have whip and spur. On my stupid days I must be patiently enlightened—"line upon line, precept upon precept." On other days when I know too much, I must be cautioned and reproved.

My favorite text? Oh, my children, you might as well ask me which is my favorite eye. Whichever one I might happen to lose, of course. Which is your favorite finger? The thumb with the felon on, to be sure. That's the one everything hits and its the one you seem to want to use the oftenest. "Should you not select and love a favorite text, then?" Oh, by all means; yes, a text that is a guiding star, a help in times of need, a text that appeals to you with peculiar sympathy and strength. A favorite text? Indeed, yes. Have a thousand of them.

"ROUNDED WITH A SLEEP"

OH, it was a Jolly Porter on the Sleeping Car that sailed,
Blow high, blow low, and so sailed he!
And forever in the wake of the Traveler he trailed,
As he cruised along the berths so easilee!

"Look aloft, look aloft!" now the Jolly Porter cried,
Blow high, blow low, and so sailed we;
And the Traveler looked aloft, and "Upper Ten" he spied,
As he cruised along the aisle so wearilee.

"I see nothing of the pillow, I see nothing of the sheet,"
Blow high, blow low, and so groaned he;
"But I've struck a basswood blanket, with a bolster at my feet,"
And he climbed into his berth distractedlee.

"Oh, arise; now arise!" the gallant Porter cried,
Blow high, blow low, and so sailed we;
"It is four o'clock A. M., and you have ninety miles to ride,
But I want to make my berths up now," said he.

"ROUNDED WITH A SLEEP"

"Avast, there; avast!" then the Traveler grumbled he,
Blow high, blow low, and so sailed we;
"How can I get up at four, when I went to bed at three?"
But the Porter bounced him out most gracefulee.

"Now, all hands ahoy!" then the grim conductor said,
"Show up, show up your checks!" cried he;
But the checks of identification, they had lost them in the bed,
As they cruised about the gorgeous P. P. C.

"These are not my patent leathers," then the weary Traveler wailed,
Blow high, blow low, and so roared he;
"Yours were taken by the pirate down in Lower Three that sailed,"
And the gallant Porter laughed most merrilee.

Now for "Quarter! Oh, Quarter!" the Porter loudly cried,
"Blow in, blow in!" and so brushed he!
But the Quarter that we gave him had a blow-hole in its side,
As we sailed into the station by the sea.

Now, all ye Jolly Porters, a warning take from me,
"Make mine up first," and so sail we!
Or they'll nail "No Quarter" to the mast when'er
they go to see
Who is cruising in the plush-lined P. P. C.!

I am a good sleeper. "Sleep, that knits up the raveled sleeve of care," has a steady contract to do all my knitting while I slumber. And I will admit that I am pretty hard on my sleeves. I have a very small brain power, and as I work it up to its full capacity, making the gage show "a hundred and enough" all the time I am awake, my intellectual and nervous faculties are frayed at the cuffs, out at the elbows, and pretty well strained at the shoulder seams when bedtime comes. And when "Nature's soft nurse" sits beside my pillow, it is a very tender lullaby to listen to her gentle sigh as she takes up my "raveled sleeve," turns it over in sweet-despairing mother fashion to find the most hopeful place of beginning, and then the muted diminuendo of her clicking needles whispers to me, "It will be all right in the morning." That is the only medicine to take.

"ROUNDED WITH A SLEEP"

I used to be foolish enough to go to bed to patch my own sleeves. To lie awake through the sweet blessed hours of darkness and silence to be sorry for the things that I had done the day before, and to fear for the things that might be done to me the coming day. To grieve for the day that was dead, and to dread the day to be born. And when I came to myself I said, "If there is neither joy in the birthday or triumph in the death-bed, what good is there in life?" And I quit it. And learned at forty what every child knows at five—how to go to sleep. Learned what every human being knows, until it is educated out of him. Learned what any baby knows.

Why, about half our education—if ever we are educated—consists in unlearning the things we have taught ourselves, and getting back to the old things we used to know so well before we ever knew anything. "When I became a man," said the great Apostle, "I put away childish things." That is right. But the trouble with most of us is that we do not put away the "childish things"; we put away the eternal things of childhood. And one of the things is the perfect Trust that leads to our pillow when most we need him—

> "Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
> Brother to Death, in silent darkness born."

I once was as foolish about lying awake "and seein' things at night" as you are. And when I tried to break myself of the evil habit, I medicined myself with all the absurd suggestions of men—counting up to a million; watching an endless line of sheep jump over an eternal rail; counting the ticks of the clock; watching myself go to sleep—all these things, so-called aids to sleep, which are but subtle inventions of the devil for keeping men awake until they go mad. And what did I do at last? Did what any sensible man—anybody on earth except myself would have done—well, say, to be sure of it, should have done in the first place—just went to sleep.

When a man in Los Angeles wants to go to Pasadena—and what man is there on earth who does not want to go to Pasadena?—he does not deliberately map out a wrong route, leading to somewhere else, say to Santa Barbara or San Diego, and say within himself, "Now, this is just as wrong as it can be, but by starting wrong, and asking my way at every cross-road, and being set right by obliging natives, I will eventually, after many turns and much countermarching and intricate tacking, reach Pasadena." He just goes to Pasadena the Blessed by the most direct way. If I wish to sit down, I say "I will sit down," and do sit down. And when I want to go to sleep, I go to sleep. When I am hungry I do not go into the sheep-raising industry in order to get a mutton chop, and I do not sow a wheat ranch to get a loaf of bread. I go to the dining-room and get something to eat. And when I want to sleep, I do not begin on some arithmetical problem that will keep me awake until I fall asleep from exhaustion.

Sometimes I want to eat between meals. Then I do not go to the dining-room. I go to the kitchen and browse. And sometimes I want to go to sleep between "sleeps." Then any nook with cosy-looking "curling-up" or "stretching-out" place in it is good as a bed. Sleeping is as easy as it is natural, when once you reacquire the lost art of achieving slumber at will. Sleep is a restorative, a tonic, a stimulant—

it's everything. Sometimes when things get hopelessly tangled up; inextricably snarled, I scoop a handful of things off my desk, throw them into the fireplace—if I threw them into the waste-basket, you see, I might afterward be tempted to dig them out and begin the snarl all over from a new starting-point of entanglement—make a plunge for the nearest "wallow" of pillows and cushions—the house is a perfect ocean of them—and sleep for ten or fifteen minutes. I awake, and, lo, "a new Heaven and a new earth." "You are so busy," you say, "that you can't afford to sleep in the daytime." Well, mebbeso, yes. I am so busy I can't afford to waste a precious minute of my "sleep medicine" in staying awake. Sometimes the worst and wickedest use—or misuse—to which a busy man or woman can put time, is to waste it in wakefulness.

Sleeping in church is a most unsatisfactory nap, the one you catch between the text and "seventhly". No one denies the delicious sense of languor that assails the weak and weakening flesh with soft approaches, when the morning is sultry, the sermon lukewarm, the meeting-house hermetically sealed, and the preacher nearly—well, let us be fair, and say about half as stupid as the listener. But you have a shamefaced sense all the time that the eye of the minister is upon you, and let me say for your comfort that you are correct—it is. He sees the first haze of temptation that creeps over your face—the dull, fishy, isinglass, lack-luster glaze that veils your open eyes; the nodding head that catches itself from time to time, the stern resolve to keep awake if it kills you that now and again asserts itself, your appealing look at a sealed window with a million acres of fresh, invigorating, soul-reviving air just outside the thickness of a pane of glass, and he sees you at last go down like a tired swimmer in sight of land that he can not reach.

How happy you are when the fitful and unequal struggle is over, and the sleep of the sanctuary "covers you all over like a cloak", save that, unlike a cloak, it does not conceal the sleeper. There is a short eternity of such happiness as comes in perfection only to the clam; somebody prods your ribs with a warning elbow; you open your eyes to behold a little widening circle of smile-ripples, and then you know that you have dropped into the calm and blessed holy silence of the hour a pebble-snore or two. But always you are equal to one thing; by some inexplicable instinct your eyes rest upon a worshiper, who has never been known so much as to wink an eye during divine service, in forty years of attendance, and you fix upon this exemplary one a reproachful gaze as who would say, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" And then you are awake; penitent, ashamed, irritated, and all the way home you lay all the blame for your slothfulness on the preacher.

This habit of slumbering in the sanctuary, far less common now than in the days of serial sermons in one volume, has long been a grief to the preacher. Good Robert Hall, in a sermon on *Hearing the Word,* said, "The practise of sleeping in places of worship, a practise we believe not prevalent in any other places of public resort, is most distressing to ministers and most disgraceful to those who indulge in it. If the apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians whether they had not houses to eat and drink in, may we not, with equal propriety, ask those who indulge in this practise whether they have not beds to sleep in, that they convert the house of God into a dormitory?"

Which leads us to wonder why it is, when one-third of a man's life is passed in bed—more than that, when we add to the hours of regular sleep, his days of illness and extra hours of laziness, when so much of a man's life is lived—or slept, in bed, that he does not pay more attention to devising the most perfectly comfortable beds that art and science and mechanical skill can make for him? Anything on which you can lie down and get to sleep isn't a bed. Many beds appear to be constructed with the sole design and purpose of preventing sleep. How many bed-heads should be inscribed with the name, "Macbeth." I have slept in them all the way from Halifax to San Diego. Some of them, the mere memories of them, will make me snore, and some will make my bones to ache like a convention of two hundred and forty-eight delegates of pains, pangs and penalties.

"The Cobblestone Mat" is a composite bed. The epidermis is woven of material like ordinary bed-ticking, save that it is practically indestructible. It is lined with corn husks, unhaggled, with bits of the stalk left on to hold the husks together. Occasionally, a whole cob is put in, but this is seldom discovered in a perfect state, being broken into pipe-size lengths by the agonized struggles and tossings of successive generations of sufferers, who have been stretched upon this ancient rack. There are a few not very well authenticated narratives of bottle necks having been discovered in the upholstering—it is called "upholstering" by the trade—of this bed. George Washington Selkirk, of Texas, the well-known traveler for the Barb Wire distillery (which you may remember placed upon the market as its sole and exclusive product a non-intoxicating and non-alcholic brandy distilled from native cactus and pine knots; used for taking grease stains out of old furniture, and quite popular in the arid regions as a harmless and innocent beverage—for the people born there) tells in the January number of the *Workman at Sleep*, of discovering a whole bottle of the product of his own house in one of these beds, in Beebe county, in which he was reducing himself to a condition of anatomical callosity. He reported the fact to the landlord, and they procured an ax with which to cut through the bed-ticking and extricate the bottle.

But by a sad chance they broke the bottle, which instantly set fire to the bed, and Mr. Selkirk and the landlord barely escaped with their lives. The hotel was burned to the ground, and most of the bed, with the exception of the "upholstery," was consumed in the conflagration, with a loss of life that has never been overestimated. The sad affair cast a gloom over the entire community for several days. We were unable to learn the name of the landlord. If one is confined for an entire night in a "Cobblestone Mat," the best way to pass the time is to slide the cobs, husk-ganglia, broken door-knobs and other items of the upholstery from place to place—the atoms move quite easily among themselves, until a fairly level foundation has been graded. Then take out the bottoms of all the bureau drawers, and with the addition of the bed-slats, which may be removed for that purpose, a very good floor may be laid on this grading, upon which any one with a cast-iron frame may rest quite comfortably until it is time to get up and change your position.

"The Kopje" is one of the most ancient forms of beds. It is lined with five hundred pounds of goose feathers, usually in a fair state of preservation. It is made up in the shape of a cone, slightly truncated. It is reached by climbing the headboard of the bed, and jumping over. Viewed from the door of the room as you enter, it looks like an everlasting mountain. After you have alighted in it, it appears like an active volcano, interior view. A great many people have gone to bed in the Kopje by their own unaided efforts. But there is no case on record where anybody ever got out of one without assistance from without. The pillows are two sizes larger than the bed.

Summer or winter there are no covers to a Kopje. There is one sheet, thin, but narrow. This you find twisted and tangled around your neck when you awake in the morning. For covering during the night, the bed foams over you, flows in on you, surrounds, enswathes, engulfs, smothers, and holds you in its writhing and feathery folds. The Kopjes in America are imported. There is a bill before Congress to establish a tariff to protect and foster an infant industry for the manufacture of Kopje beds, but some one added a rider, providing also for the protection of the people who would have to sleep in them, and that killed the bill in committee. That was the year in which, as you may not remember, Owgoost Schnauffellseiengehausenschrifft was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

"The Incline" bed is common and half-popular throughout the great Middle West. It is higher at the other end; and it doesn't make any difference which way you sleep, that is the foot of the bed. The bed is very carefully surfaced, so as to expedite, for the occupant, the process of sliding himself together. In order to prevent the brains from running entirely into the head and out at the ears, the incline is always provided with a three-sided bolster, a foot high at the wide side, narrowing down and terminating in a ridgy seam, which fits under the shoulder-blades. The bolster is upholstered with straw, packed in by hand with a steel tamping rod, same as they pack a horse collar. It is, however, much harder than a horse collar, although not nearly so smooth.

If you keep the bolster in bed, and try to sleep with it under your head, you will break in two. If you throw it out on the floor, the bolster will break. After it has been hurled out a great many times, it is broken into so many joints that it feels like a dog chain. In rare instances, the incline is made so as to slant from the side of the bed, instead of from the other end. But this is not popular with the hotels who use the incline, because, then, the guest merely slides off the bed on the floor, and finding how much more comfortable it is than the bed, he continues to sleep there during his sojourn at that hostelry, thereby getting the sleep he has paid for, and reducing the profits of the house.

One might go on and enumerate a score of other breeds of beds, but the reader will readily add to the list many unclassified beds that dwell within his memory yet already. There is "The Hammock." This is merely a plain, woven-wire mattress, which in fifteen or twenty years of constant use by single sleepers weighing two hundred and fifty pounds each, will easily transform itself into a hammock that will hold in its capacious pouch as many people as can crawl into that bed. As fast as a man gets in, he rolls down to the bottom. "The Hammock" always has sponge pillows, knotted like gnarly old live-oaks.

Then, there is "The Reservation," preempted by wandering tribes of bloodthirsty savages, whom no amount of patience and gentleness and kind treatment has ever been able to wean from their sleepless cruelty. But, be it ever so lumpy, there's nothing like bed for a sleepy man. "The bed has become a place of luxury to me," said the great Napoleon; "I would not exchange it for all the thrones in the world."

"In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die;
This near approach a bed may show,
Of human bliss to human woe."

A DAY IN MOTLEY

YOU may take it as a rule, man's a fool; ne'er contented with his lot, always wanting what he's not, never liking what he's got; when it rains, he wants it dry, when it's dry, for rain he'll cry; prays for money when he's poor, when he's rich he prays for more; when he's got all he can find, dies, and leaves it all behind; if he's lame, he wants to walk; if he's dumb, he tries to talk; by and large, and up and down, in the country and in town, you may take it as a rule, man's a fool.

There is one day in the year which we do celebrate. We may divide on Washington's birthday, for there are unto this day people who maintain that Washington did unjustly and tyrannously when he compelled the Tories to submit to a government which was founded without their consent and against their will; there are some Orangemen, so to speak, who will not "walk" on St. Patrick's day, and there are some Irishmen who will not observe the king's birthday to keep it hilarious. But the glorious first of April—everybody observes that day. Oh, yes; you're in; you're a charter member, you are; in fact, you're It; you're the Queen of the May, that morning; that's why the carrier waked you early, Fooley dear; and that's why you are so eagerly scanning these lines to see if your name is spelled right. Oh, the day wouldn't be perfect if you weren't in it! In fact, in a way, it might be considered your birthday.

Now that we pleasantly understand each other—what's that? Oh, "You thank Heaven that while you may not be perfect, you are not a fool." Yes; that's what we thought you thought. That's why the convention elected you president, on the first ballot. There wasn't a dissenting vote. There was no other candidate. The convention was just waiting for that kind of a fool to nominate himself with that kind of speech. No, don't "thank Heaven that you are not perfect." Imperfection isn't the gift of Heaven. God created man perfect. There wasn't a flaw or a fault about him. All our follies and all our badnesses are human acquisition. We hunted them up, and put them on, we made improvements on them, and invented new ones, ourselves. That's why the first of April is set apart all over the world, as a universal holiday. It belongs to the human race. And every year, you know, we common children of folly, look around for a Wise Man, who knows it all and has forgotten the rest, and we elect him Chief. He's the Biggest One of Us. The Biggest on Earth. Is that you?

Now that we have honored you by putting you in the chief place at the feast, let us on with the hilarity. This is our day—"All Fool's day!" Happy people! Here, once a year we can meet on a common level, without regard to race, age, sex, previous political affiliations and present religious inclinations. True, we do not willingly admit, even to one another, that we are constituent members of our glorious order, but as we all know it, each about the other, let us not mar this freedom of the day by dissembling.

On this day, that is set apart for those of earth's creatures who are endowed with reason and the faculty of speech, even on this day that is sacred to fools, when we plume ourselves upon our shrewdness, it only shows what manner of fools we be. We carefully avoid the alluring and corpulent pocketbook that is ostentatiously laid upon the sidewalk, a powerful temptation to the mercenary mind, as we are hastening to insure our precious lives in a Responsible Company that guarantees a quarterly dividend of twenty-two per cent. the first year. If we pick up the pocketbook we shall hear some invisible body laugh. But when we take out the Get-rich-quick policy, there is also invisible laughter, but, alas, we do not hear it. We scorn to kick the hat that, temptingly poised like an extinguisher of glee over the upright brick, invites us to kick it half-way across the street. But we rush across the street just as an automobile, a runaway horse and a trolley-car are trying to settle the right of way, and if we kick anything with that broken leg for the next six weeks it is ourself.

Vainly does the man who smuggled it without paying any duty, attempt to sell us a nice, large, square, gold brick. But the first book agent who comes along catches us with the first three numbers of the *Mastodon Encyclopedic Universal Dictionary of Prehistoric History,* to be issued in seventy-nine bimonthly parts. You can't fool us with a note inviting us to dine with some mysterious person at some improbable hour. But you can easily get us to shriek our lungs to rags, to stay up and out nights for six weeks, and ruin our digestion and clothes electioneering for some "farmer candidate" who thinks a yoke of steers means a pair of bunco men, or a candidate on the "soldier's ticket" who thinks a gun swab is something you load a musket with. We won't touch off a bear trap to see how the thing works, but a little trap baited with an advertisement telling how you can make ten thousand dollars in ten days without work, catches us by the neck—every time? Well, not oftener than every other time.

You have known a fool who knew enough to make one million dollars, spend one thousand dollars of it for stuff that is warranted to make long, curling, dark-brown hair grow on a billiard ball, and ten thousand dollars to get back a stomach that God gave him for nothing. And you have known another fool who never had a cent, spend one million dollars' worth of time, which he did have, wishing that he had one million dollars, which he couldn't keep, if he got. I have known the fool who thought himself to be wise above that which is written, to bend his strength to the handle of the grindstone and circulate it with the power of his arms and the ache of his back, until the ax was sharpened to the keenness of the razor's edge, when straightway he that held the ax smote off the head of him that turned the grindstone. I have known the fool to pack his aching head in ice, and bind the same hard and tight with a towel in the morning, and swear by all his gods and some of his goddesses that he would never do it again, and lo, when the sun went down once more he did the same thing with intricate and fiery variations.

I have seen the fool go forth and look for a snake to bite him, and, being bitten, to bewail his fate and cry out that he was the most unfortunate man that ever was born. I have seen the fool drop a bag of money—which is to say, a wad—into an exceedingly deep and dark hole, the bottom whereof no man could tell, save he who held the sack at the other end, and then go away, weeping, and earn another wad, which he came back and dropped into the same hole, if so be that he might see where the first one went. And they both went the same way, which was a "no thoroughfare," but went straight through just the same.

A very wise fool one day said to me, with a fine curl of scorn on his prehensile lips, "Five years after you are dead, not a soul in all this world will laugh at any of the silliness you have been uttering all these years of your foolish life." And I said I could tell him even better than that: ever so many people don't laugh at my poor jokes now. And they would not be remembered while I lived. And those that were remembered would be forgotten long before I died. Nobody knows that so well as the joker. Ah, my boy, people will not laugh at our jokes in the years to come. Not at our funny things. They will laugh at our wisdom. That's what our children will laugh at. They will laugh at our profound views upon theology, and astronomy, and medicine, and geology, and politics. We do not laugh at the funny things men said to Christopher Columbus. We laugh to read how their best and profoundest scholarship proved that the world was flat. That's what we laugh at. We laugh at the "wisdom" of our fathers.

There was a wise man once upon a time who "knew" that no locomotive could ever run faster than fifteen miles an hour with a train of cars. Didn't think it; he "knew" it. There was another wise man who "knew" that the best light that could ever be discovered was lard oil. There was a man who "knew" that Colonel Drake was insane when he said he could pump oil out of the ground, as you pump water. There was a man who "knew" that Edison was insane when he was experimenting with the electric light. There was a man who "knew" that the telephone was a newspaper lie. There was a man who "knew" that you could never make the sun draw your portrait. There was a man who "knew" where the Great American Desert was when it wasn't. There was a man who "knew" he was going to call the roll of his slaves under the shadow of Bunker Hill monument. There was a man who "knew" that the horse had reached his limit of speed when he trotted a mile in 2:40.

And to-day there are men who "know" that the gigantic corporations are devouring the life and substance of the country; who "know" that the people are helplessly and hopelessly enslaved, and wear galling fetters under their socks and clanking manacles under their cuffs. You can't see 'em, but you can hear 'em when you shake hands with the other slave. There are men who "know" that all politics is corrupt, all politicians are mercenary, the civil service is rotten to the core, and all our social life honeycombed with decay.

Among the other fools who inhabit this globe from generation to generation, there will be always the fool in opposition, who thinks he can stay the triumphant progress of the chariot by hanging back in the breeching and braying, "I object!" Every generation has him. Every team has a mule that puts forth all its intellect, all its strength, all its zeal and enthusiasm into "the holdbacks." And he isn't of any earthly account except when the wagon is going down-hill. And the old world chariot isn't going that way, son. Not in this day and generation, it isn't.

The only thing you can do with that fellow in the team—the fellow whose only characteristic is whining, obstinate, pig-headed, mulish opposition to everything—is to keep moving and drag him along. For he's got to come with the rest of the team. Keep ahead of him. Rasp his hocks with the doubletrees. The chariot never stands still, not a minute. Tomorrow will come on time and go on time, for all the fools and all the wise men on earth; for the fellow who runs close up into his collar, with joy and exultation and hope, and for the fellow who, with his eyes shut tight, his ears laid down along his neck, his back up on his shoulders, his haunches sprawled on the ground, his heels digging in the road, and his heart in the mud under the wheels, comes rasping and scraping and heehawing along, yelling that he's going to stay right where he is, and hold everything else with him, and that

"* * * This rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."

And he doesn't know that the rock is flying along, too, with the rest of the outfit, round and round the sun, over a thousand miles a minute, and racing from west to east twenty-five thousand miles a day, and only one actor in the entire aggregation standing still, and that's the fool who only thinks he is.

Why, my boy, every time you make a jump, you throw dust back in that fellow's eyes. Don't have any "holdbacks" on your harness, boy. You're going to run up-hill all the way; you won't need 'em. All you want is an easy collar and taut traces; you'll run light and feel free. Step out and keep pace with the time and its spirit, and sing as you run, and keep the fellow in the breeching so covered with dust that the world will only know he's there by the dust around him and the noise he makes. Oh, maybe you will strike a heart-straining, breath-catching gait once in a while, when the grade is easy and the road is narrow; where the cliff is a wall of granite on one side and a sheer drop into Avernus on the other. You do give us heart-failure once in a breezy day, son, when you hit a 1:19 gait on a 3:20 road, but never mind; there's a good driver on the seat, and a firm hand on the lines, and a stinging, cracking, sure-reaching whip to keep you inside the traces, and a steady foot on the brake.

You're not the first colt that ever started in to stampede the team and run away with the chariot, and she's making regular trips right on time, up to this day. And I'd rather see you coming along the reaches, my boy, with the bit in your teeth, your heels in the air, the brake-rod sprung and the splinters flying just enough to rock the passengers awake, than have you come into the relay station with your legs set like crowbars, the dust of the whole team flying in your face, and you only keeping up with the neck-yoke, because you couldn't help it. If you must be a fool, son, be in the lead. You can see farther, when you are at the head of the procession, and you can set the pace to suit yourself.

Oh, when you hold it up and look at it as the light shines through, there are some threadbare spots in life, sure enough.

Man is born young, with many ready-made troubles waiting for him, and no teeth. And sometimes it would be money in his pocket if he had less of one and none of either. For the troubles he could make for himself as he grew older. And as for his teeth, when he has none, he is happy, his food assimilates, and his digestion is perfect. When he cuts the first one, he has convulsions, and as fast as he gets them they begin to ache. As the last one is coming through the dentist is pulling the first one out. And it is so that after he becomes used to them and they have grown to be a vital necessity to him, he loses them all. And his mouth is fitted up with a porcelain grin and a plate built to hold raspberry seeds, so that the last state of that man's mouth is worse than the first. This is also vanity.

In the midst of life he is in debt, and the assessor is a burden to him, likewise the tax collector pursueth him whithersoever he goeth, and the real estate man haunteth him. Wherefore, between undervaluing his property to the one and overvaluing it to the other, his conscience becometh cross-eyed and he forgetteth what the truth tastes like.

He walketh forth in the bright glad sunlight to absorb the ozone of mountain and sea, and the bank messenger meeteth him in the way with a sight draft for four hundred and twenty-seven dollars.

The baluster of life is full of slivers, and he slideth down it with considerable rapidity.

In the morning he goeth forth with hope in his heart and confidence in his trainer, and is knocked out in two short rounds.

He cometh home late in the eventide, when it is dark as a cave, and the wheelbarrow lieth in wait for him in the garden path, and it riseth up and smiteth him, and falleth to the earth with him, and runneth one handle into his ribs and the other into his ear.

In the balmy spring he taketh a journey into a far country east of the mountain to see the old folk, and a blizzard striketh him in his summer clothes, a thousand miles from home, and filleth his system with woe and quinine.

He putteth on his yachting jacket when the summer is come, and the wasp, who hath builded a nest for her young between the armholes thereof, maketh it tropical for him.

He getteth into his red, red golf jacket, and hieth him forth to the links, and a gentleman cow, with a deep bass voice, a curl on his brow and horns like a buffalo, showeth him the shortest way across the cañon, and the quickest way over the bunkers. He carryeth a torch in the procession, and spilleth kerosene oil all over his Sunday coat, and yelleth himself voiceless for the grand old party, and neglecteth his business and forsaketh his family to whoop it up for the man of the people, and lo, his neighbor, who marched not, and who would not shout for anybody, and who put up never a cent, getteth the post-office.

If he weareth old garments that are comfortable to his frame and are bent to fit his angles, they who behold him in the street cry after him and say, "Behold the hobo!" And if he dress himself up to date and wear seemly garments, they say, "Shoot the dude!"

His daughter, who is the child of the morning, whose beauty is the smile of the starlight, makes a quilt for the Mission Band, containing more than not quite four million stitches, each one crazier than all the others, and her old father groaneth as he fasteneth his suspenders with a wire nail, a piece of twine, a safety-pin and one regularly-ordained button which aforetime of a truth was on his overcoat.

He strolleth into the leafy forest and wood-ticks swarm upon him, and chigors fill his epidermis.

He climbeth along the trail up into the breezy mountain heights and straightway biteth himself with a rattlesnake.

His boots are tight, his hat is loose, somebody daily sticks his red-ink pen into the black ink, and his fountain-pen into the mucilage.

There is a spring gun in the orchard, a ram in the meadow, a bull in the pasture, and a mad dog in the lane, so that he getteth whip-sawed nearly every deal.

Small wonder, then, that sometimes he loseth heart, buyeth a through ticket for Adullam station, and, uniting himself to the Discontented, joineth the Mugwumps and standeth upon the platform of "Down with everybody and everything, all the time."

Oh, well, things are never so bad, even at their worst, that they couldn't be a little worse. And, if we must be fools, once in a year, let us be nervy fools. "It is to laugh." There is no fool so oppressive in his folly as the solemn fool. The owl that always looks wise and never frivols is poorer than any fool among birds. Any boy knows how to catch an owl, but who ever caught a chattering jay by hand after the sun was up? What animal among beasts hath so grave a countenance as the ass? Also, among men? Let us mingle a little healthful levity now and then with our gravity, and temper our folly with becoming seriousness, and life will be so worth the living that not one man in fifty thousand will want to quit it when he has to.

"Of two evils, choose neither." God never yet compelled a man to make a choice of two evils. It isn't that there are two kinds of wrong in the world; there is one kind of wrong and one kind of right. And the trouble with the fool is, that he wants several kinds of wrong, one of which, the pleasantest kind, shall be accounted to him for righteousness. But that can't be done, son. Keep that in mind, for a year, anyhow, and next Lenten season you won't know where to look for your old hair shirt, it will be so long since you threw it away.

TAKING ACCOUNT OF STOCK

PACKING UP TO TREK

IT was the Ancient Resident,
With a hammer in his hand.
He said, "Would I were President
O'er all this goodly land;

"I would slay the man who would invent
A box for packing goods;
And the man who made it should be sent
To live in the trackless woods."

For, oh, he stood in a wild, wild waste,
A chaos of boxes and things;
And barrels met him wherever he faced,
And papers, and nails, and strings.

Around him they piled the bent-wood chairs;
Rare lamps, and the sewing-machine;
And the loftiest heap of things on the stairs
That ever the man had seen.

He pounded and hammered the whole day through,
  And he wrought with a rusty saw;
And oft as they asked, "Was he nearly through?"
  He savagely answered, "Naw!!!"

He rose up to work at the break of day,
  And he wrought till the burning noon,
While the evening shadows, cool and gray,
  Heard him sawing the same old tune.

There were three blood blisters on one of his paws;
  He had pounded the end of his thumb;
And he yelled so much that his wearied jaws
  Hung paralyzed, limp and dumb.

Oh, look, and oh, look! where he sawed his knee;
  And see! where his trousers are tored!
And look—where he sat, unwittinglee
  On the side of a painted board.

He is covered with grime, and lint, and dirt;
  He has mashed his toes with the ax;
All over his system he's pounded and hurt,
  With sundry and divers whacks.

The things he should pack he has left outside;
  He's nailed up the things he should leave;
The box is too short, and the things are too wide,
  And his "golf talk" makes every one grieve.

He nailed up the clocks with the kitchen stove;
  The books with the crystal he packed;
His desk and a mirror together he rove,
  And he wept when the mirror it cracked.

His wife's new bonnet he jammed in a churn;
  His mother's, he chucked in the fire;
And new destruction at every turn
  He wreaks in the height of his ire;
They can hear him up-stairs yelling, "Burn, burn, burn!"
  And down-stairs a-hollering, "Fire!"

And when at night he seeks him his bed,
  No slumber or rest he takes;
From his tingling feet to his throbbing head
  He has more than three hundred aches;
He wishes and wishes that he were dead,
  And the night with his groanings he breaks.

And this thought sobs through all of his moans,
  And makes him the saddest of men—
The things he has packed with such bruises and groans,
  Some day he'll unpack again.

I know there is some poverty in the world; a great deal, in fact, although not nearly so much as is generally believed. A few years ago, in the black night of the real hard times that came when people were trying a political experiment which they have never cared to repeat, and which it is not necessary to specify more particularly here, a gentleman in Portland announced in the daily papers that he would give a bag of flour, a bushel of meal, and a sack of potatoes, or something equivalent to them, if preferred by the recipient, to any family who were destitute, and who did not use tobacco, or drink whisky, or keep a dog. He offered to do this for one hundred families. And it is said that he did not receive one application for assistance.

Things like this convince me that there is more wealth in the country than people think, and the cry of "hard times" is kept up merely because some people have got into the habit of it, and don't know how to stop. The drink habit isn't the only one in the world that fastens its clutches upon its victims with hooks of steel. Men are like the little girl who stopped crying one day, got interested in her happy play, then suddenly stopped playing and said, sweetly, "Mamma, what was I crying about a little while ago?" The mother told her. "Oh, yes!" exclaimed the little cherub, "boo-hoo! boo-hoo! boo-hoo-oo-oo!" and cried for another quarter of an hour. It became a pleasure to the child to weep and wail.

I do not wonder that men become rich, when I observe how strong is the inherent faculty of acquisition. Man, even when he is a spendthrift, is a saving animal. When there weren't enough people in all the world to secure a city charter of the first class, Abraham and Lot found the whole world was scarcely big enough for them and their possessions, and they divided it by turning their backs upon each other and going in opposite directions. And, as it has been ever since, the man who had the first choice, and tried to get all of the best—"hog everything," I think I have heard the boys call it—got the hot end of the poker, and lost all that he grabbed. And you have seen a farm where the most, and, indeed, the only valuable thing about it was the fence, which expensively enclosed a quarter-section of worthlessness.

But, poor as the farm was, it was the man's own, and though it was ruining him, health and pocketbook, to keep it, he would not give it away. It wasn't worth anything, but you'd have to buy it to get it. It was that man's share of the earth; it was his interest and right in creation; it was his title to a little part of the great universe. If it's only a lot with a twenty-five-foot front, my son, you ought to own a portion of the solar system, and then you could walk with your head among the stars, when you realized that whenever they called an annual meeting of the stockholders in the constellation of Hercules, they'd have to send you a notice, or the meeting wouldn't be legal, and they couldn't change the orbit of a star or put on a new comet, with a limited schedule, without your vote. Nothing makes a man feel so rich as to own some of the earth, with rights that reach up to the sky, or as high as the telephone wires, anyhow, and growl all through every campaign about the taxes, which amount to eight cents per annum, and haven't been paid for six years. Own a little of the universe, my son.

But the wealth of the poor man becomes apparent to himself when he takes a compulsory inventory, because he is compelled to move. I say compelled, because no man moves voluntarily, after the first time. He is led by an uncontrollable desire for a change, an overmastering confidence that he will better himself by it, or he may be driven by stern necessity, but in either, or any case it is compulsory. And then he discovers that he is the possessor of treasures that money can not buy, and that most people's money isn't going to set a price on. He is going to go over some of the "things" which the years have accumulated for him, because, he says, with a severely-meaning glance at his wife, "There is no sense in turning the whole house into a storage for things that nobody will ever look at again, and which there was no earthly sense in keeping in the first place." Poor man! He doesn't know what he is going into. Even if it be the fifth or seventh time he has passed through the experience, it is always new to him.

In the first place, he is willing to make affidavit that he never saw the first trunk that he opens. He didn't know it was in the house. Where and when, for mercy's sake, did his wife get that car of Juggernaut? And when she meekly shows him his own name on the end, painted in his own unmistakable characters, he merely remarks that that is "too thin," and proceeds to find out what she has stowed away in it.

As he dives into the contents, which appear to be mostly letters, on the top row, a strange-looking worm, of deadly countenance on one end and a thing that looks like a harpoon on the other, runs up his sleeve and helps him to have a fit, which lasts until his voice is gone and his sleeve torn off, and the supposed worm turns out to be a wad of fluff carried by the wind.

And then you and your wife sit down together by that one old trunk, and all day long rake things out of it. Photographs of people whom neither of you can remember, and which he finally labels with the wrong names and lays aside to keep. Old school-books, with fearful and wonderful information in them—everything obsolete except the good old multiplication table, which is too mean to die and too tough to decay. And that long-abandoned and forgotten text book, an English grammar. Takes you some time to find out what that is. Letters written by hands that are dust with the flowers they clasped when last you saw them. Somehow the hopes, and the dreams, the plans and the ambitions in the faded old letters seem to be as old as the multiplication table, and yet as new. There is something else, then, that doesn't die? And that lives forever, because love and faith and hope are immortal. These you will keep. And trinkets. And baby things. And broken things you laid aside to mend five or ten years ago. Old packages of receipts. The tradesmen who made them out, and who awaited with varying degrees of patience or wrath for their money, are dead or old, and the goods are gone with the man who sold them, and the boy who drove the wagon is the head of the present house, and patronizes you when you meet in society, and speaks of you as "one of our oldest customers", when you wish he wouldn't. Old invitations to this and that. What cards they used then! And how stiltedly formal they were before "rag-time" ease came in with the high hand-shake. And a glove, with a faint memory of perfume still about it—yes, you can get it on again; maybe; but try it very tenderly; Yesterday must be handled lovingly and gently when we try to make it fit To-day. He remembers when he would have given his right hand to have laid that glove against his cheek in such fashion as you laughingly pat into it now. And there is a belt—a girdle of ribbon with the buckle they wore long ago! Now, try to put that on, and the children will come romping in to see what you are laughing about. And lo, it nestles about the waist of your oldest girl as though it were made for her.

Old-fashioned trifles and obsolete trinkets; bits of finery, too flimsy now even for lint; memoranda relating to plans that were then in the air, and now are ancient history; things that take up room, harbor moths, create dust, stand ever in the way; are looked at, perhaps, so often in a lifetime; are of no earthly or unearthly use; things that will never again fit anywhere; books and toys, and tools, and garments, and traps that should have been given away or destroyed the day when they went out of active commission, long years ago. Yet here they are. And here they will probably stay, for a large proportion of this uselessness you will put back again in new places, to pull over and dig into some other day when you can least afford to waste your time on them. Now, why do you keep these things?

Why do you put away broken things with the impossible dream of getting at them and mending them some day? You never will. You can buy new things more cheaply. And the new things will be up-to-date; they will be better than the old ever were. And if you are poor, you can least afford to tinker over the old things. Go through your own house, and you can find a cart-load of useless things in it that will never again be used, and for the saving of which you can give to yourself no good reason. Why, you'd dress better if you would give to the mission boxes ninety-nine per cent. of the things you have worn, the day you lay them aside.

It is an axiom of business that there should be no dead capital about the house. And yet every home in the land is fairly burdened with the useless and the impossible. "No man putteth new cloth into an old garment." What a wide, deep lesson there was. You can't patch a good new reputation upon an old bad character. You can't sew on a virtue to cover the hole left by a worn-out vice. So much better —in fact, it is absolutely necessary to throw away all the old life, and begin a perfectly new one. That is the weak point in "swearing off" anything, son, and patching a "good resolution" over the old stain. Put off all the life that went with the old fault. Don't try to "mend things", when it's so much better and so much cheaper to get new things.

Now, nobody knows how much of useless "truck" there is about the house until he goes through all his belongings. You know, vaguely, that there is a lot of "stuff" in those boxes and trunks and old chests of drawers stowed away in trunk-room and garret. But it isn't until you take an actual inventory of them that you know what a mass of dead capital you are carrying in the plant. How many years you have spent amassing all this! And it all served its purpose in its day. It has grown obsolete. It is useless. But you cart it around with you, from one house to another. You store it away and pay insurance and storage on it. You threaten again and again to burn up the whole outfit, but unless you are a man or woman of marvelously strong character, you don't do anything of the sort. You keep on lugging it around with you.

I wonder how much of useless capital we carry in our lives? How much of worthless accumulation we have stowed away in heart and brain, in thought and memory, to the exclusion of better things, that we still keep on carrying about with us? Some things that were never worth anything when they were new. Pleasures that were absolutely hurtful. Amusements that didn't merely kill time, but murdered the good impulses and the good deeds that heart and brain and hand had otherwise found time and desire to do. How we may have gorged the mind with books that were insipid, or vulgar, or inane or vicious, until there was no room on the shelf now for a good book! How we may have stored the life with puerile ambitions, selfish plans, narrow ideas, shallow and groveling aspirations!

I suppose many of us do not know just what stock we are carrying. We live such hurrying, rushing, overcrowded, high-pressure lives that we can't suspend business long enough to take an account of stock. And we glance at the dusty, old, shelf-worn goods sometimes, and say, "Oh, well, they're no account, but they're not much in the way, and it's too much trouble to take them down and look over them." By and by you will get a notice to evacuate the premises. There is no new tenant coming into the old tabernacle, but you've got to get out. The old shell is going to be torn down to make room for an entirely new one, for the Owner is one who doesn't believe in patching. And you've got to make the "grand trek." You've got to get clear off the earth. And the angel will make you unpack every bale in the caravan before he will let you through the gate into the other world.

And it's a question which gate you'll be sent through, then. What sort of picture are you going to present, as you stand at the gate of Heaven, and unload all the things you've piled up, and stacked up, and gathered into, and stored away in your life in all these years on earth? What a heap of trash it will make! What you have read, what you have thought, what you have said, what you have done. The things that you have cherished. The baubles that you have considered precious. The tinsel that you have adored. All the things of which you have made your life. I don't know how you are living, nor what you're doing. But you do. What are you gathering to yourself in this life, that you are going to take into the next one? That's a joyous thing for you to think about. And if the contemplation doesn't make you joyful, why, it's a good thing for you to think about, anyhow.

THE RELIEF OF THE SLAMRACK

IF there is one thing upon which I pride myself more than another, it is something else. Not that I assume any credit to myself for this superiority, because it is a faculty which is inborn with me. Very few men can say as much, and the man who dares say more is none. At least, none that I know of. With these remarks, which explain themselves as well as any living creature can explain them, permit me to pass to the next thing, which will be much the same, only different.

Visitors who have been permitted to an interior view of the "den" wherein I store the intellectual apparatus with which I conduct my experiments upon human patience and credulity have often remarked upon its neatness and its systematic order. I have not infrequently made the assertion that I could go into that room the darkest night in the year, at the darkest hour, and lay my hand upon the book, memorandum, pencil or whatever it was I wanted. And this was not idle boasting; it is true. I usually turn on the light before going in, but that has no effect upon the darkness of the night. That is just as dark as ever it was. It has pleased me to note that the visitors believed me. At any rate, they said they did. And I believed the visitors. If they did not believe me, then we were in the same boat, anyhow, and I had the proud satisfaction of knowing that I was quite as truthful as my friends.

One night, not so long ago but that I have had time to forget it, were it not for my interest to remember it, I was aroused from a beautiful dream by the slamming of a shutter. I can go to sleep in a railway-station hotel, with the yard engines playing tag up and down the tracks all night, without a struggle. But a slamming shutter murders sleep with a refinement of cruelty that would give Macbeth points. You never know when to listen for the next slam. And you don't know whether it will be a single or a double slam. The next time it flies open you can distinctly hear the catch fall into place, and you say, "Thank Heaven," as devoutly and earnestly as though you really believed that Heaven sends angels down to earth to fasten shutters for men who are too lazy to get out of bed and walk across a room only eighteen feet wide.

Heaven is good to us; vastly better than we deserve, the majority of us—all of us, in fact, except myself and a few personal friends whom I could name, being unprofitable servants—but I do not believe that Providence condescends to do general housework for people who snore. As far as I can remember I can recall but one instance in which the Lord ever closed a shutter for anybody. He did close a window for Noah. But that was probably more to keep the other sinners from getting in, than to save Noah a little trouble. But just after you have thanked Heaven for the catching of your shutter it comes back again with a crash that makes the glass rattle and jingle, and sets every nerve on the quiver.

Anybody who might overhear your next remarks would conclude that if ever Heaven shut a door for you you would be on the outside. Sometimes the shutter pats softly against the window half a dozen times, just stirring you up lightly. You listen and wonder what that queer sound is; it sounds like burglars; you never heard a burglar, but that sounds just like one. You listen with your hair arranging itself pompadour; the gentle tapping keeps up. You cry, "Who's there?" Nobody says anything, and at last, like the boy hunting the cricket, you decide that it is "nawthin' but a noise," and lie down again.

Just as your head touches the pillow the shutter, which has only been going through these preliminary tappings to get on a good ready, hauls back, makes a false motion or two, and lets go against the side of the house with a bang that turns your heart to ice, and silences the meat-hound howling in the next yard. To save your life, after that, when you get your nerves calmed down sufficiently to permit you to walk across the room without waltzing like a teetotum, you get up to fasten the shutter. You then discover that it is on the adjoining house, and go back to your bed again.

But this night, after going through the nervous agony attendant upon a shutter séance, I became convinced that the sleep destroyer was loosely adjusted to my own property, and moreover that it was a "den" window. I remained perfectly quiet for a long time, hoping that some other wakeful member of the household, more nervous than myself, would weary of the racket, get up and bind the slamming bedlam to silence. But nobody else appeared to be awake.

Once or twice I sat up in bed and shouted, "What's that?" not for information, but for the purpose of reinforcing the shutter and arousing some one of the family. Once awake, I knew the sufferer could not get to sleep. But the alarm failed. I could hear deep breathings from the other rooms; I could hear the shutter softly creaking as it lined up to buck the center once more; I could hear a distant cat bewailing the mocking fate that shut up the barn and locked the kitchen while it was foraging at a neighboring manse; I could hear all the noises, loud and soft, near and far, it seemed to me, that were making themselves heard anywhere in the world at that time. But not another soul in the house could hear anything.

I am a patient man, but patience has limits, even in the constitution of the patientest man living. I exhaled a hollow groan for the callous indifference of my family, sleeping while I was distracted and maddened by the furious bombardment against the side of the house. Then I arose, and in my bare feet—the night was darker than the Cave of Adullam, which has the reputation of being a rather shady place—or I would not have done such a thing for the world.

Feeling my way cautiously in the rayless gloom, I struck the edge of the door only once, backed off, got past it next time successfully, and, uttering audibly a statement that would have saddened the hearts of my family had any of them been awake, I went down-stairs, doing, I fancy, a somewhat creditable ballet, as I felt my way through the darkness with poised and flourishing feet. However, it was wasted grace; thrown away on the Cimmerian darkness—a friend of mine, Ben Evrawhair, says he once traveled across the Cimmerian Desert, and it was so dark at noon that he trod on his own heels—but I kept on dancing just the same. I reached the "den"; I opened the door after feeling all over it five times before lighting upon the knob, and stepped cautiously into the room.

The old room; the room that I know so well; the room into which I am wont to go—according to tradition—in the inky blackness of the darkest night, and pick things up by the right end. I thought of these traditions as I started on my voyage of relief, and wished that I had drawn some of the shadiest of them less darkly. I put out my hand and felt something that was a stranger to me. It felt like a globe, but I knew the globe was never placed on top of the bookshelves. I felt carefully all over this new object. Just as I pushed it off and it went crashing to the floor I recognized it. It was a lamp which belonged in the sitting-room, but I had carried it up to the "den" because my study lamp was not filled.

A man making a voyage of relief in his bare feet across a carpeted plain, newly strewn with a broken lamp-chimney, is about as pleasantly situated as a mettlesome horse charging across a battle-field planted with spike-blooming caltrops. By much tiptoeing, however, with very slow solemn movements, as though I were performing a religious dance, I avoided the crystal fragments. I made one high long stride to get out of the haunted ground, and stepped into a large waste-basket, a sort of a Pompeian vase-looking thing with a narrow top. My foot forced its way into the top, but it was like pulling off a porous plaster to get it out again. I got rid of the basket, but upset a rocking-chair in the struggle, and went into camp to think about it.

I made a cautious détour to avoid the fallen chair, and when my calculations told me I was past it I knew where I was, stepped out boldly and fell over it. I didn't so much mind running my arm through the bottom of it, because it was an old chair, anyhow, and needed recaning. But as I realized that I had impaled myself in the short ribs on one of the Heaven-pointing rockers, a tired feeling crept over me that I would have traded for a match in a minute. I groaned heavily, hoping that some one hearing the fall and the groan would think I had been murdered and come in with a light. But if any one heard the groan he made an incorrect diagnosis. I picked myself up with some difficulty. Twice I was nearly on my feet when the chair tilted, got an underhold on me and threw me heavily. By most desperate efforts I kept it from getting on top of me, to which I owe the fact that I'm alive now.

Once more on my feet, I sidled over until I could touch the bookshelves. Thus guided, I moved forward cautiously until I stepped on something which felt like a tack, but which I discovered afterward was only a piece of glass. I was nearing the banging shutter now; I could feel the cold air blowing upon me. I reached out one foot and felt that it rested on nothing. I felt down farther with it, but could not touch bottom.

I stooped down and investigated. Somehow or other I had got turned around in my struggle with the rocking-chair, groped out of the "den", walked down the hall and was on my way down-stairs. A new danger threatened the expedition. If I were heard prowling around down-stairs I stood a good chance of getting myself shot at. Moreover, as I was an honest man, the master of the house, and not a burglar, I would be shot dead the first time anybody snapped at me. A real burglar, of course, would be missed forty feet in a room sixteen feet square. I got down on my hands and knees and crawled back into the "den", ramming into a pile of unbound magazines and strewing the floor with them.

After crawling into the "den" a sufficient distance to guarantee myself against another escape out of the door, I rose to my feet. As I began this maneuver my head came in violent contact with some hard substance, with a crash that made a thousand lights dance fearfully before my eyes, and I sank back to my former recumbent posture and wept. I had crawled under the desk. But in the awful darkness how was I to know that? I retrograded from the desk, backing into a revolving-chair. I felt my way into this, sat down, went into camp and rubbed my head while I planned another forward movement.

I bethought me that sometimes there was a box of matches on my desk, and reached out and felt for it. I put my finger into the ink-well. I did not dare go crawling and feeling around among my papers with a finger dripping with ink; I could not safely wipe it on anything on the desk, so I did the best thing I could: I wiped it thoroughly and carefully on my hair. "Thank Heaven," I said, "I am not bald."

Next morning, when I learned upon further investigation that I had dipped my finger not into the ink-well but into the mucilage-pot, I wasn't so sure that a head of hair was always an advantage over a bald and glistening skull.

The shutter, which had been silent for some time, now fired a solitary shot. This guided me in the right direction. I moved forward with great caution, holding my arms outspread, and stepping high. With a shriek that might have curdled the blood in a turnip I put my foot into something cold and wet and slimy, and something scaly and horrible wriggled away from beneath it. I jerked my foot into the air, and, trembling from head to foot, weak, limp and terrified, sank to my knees, rasping my shins as I did so on the sides of a common wash-tub.

I then remembered that my son was keeping a young alligator, about ten or twelve inches long, for a friend who had recently brought it from Florida. I now resolved that it should go into the ice-house the next day if another morning should dawn in this world upon the wretched being sitting in the cold and dark, shivering and sobbing.

How long I remained there I do not know. It was an oblivion of horror. I remembered all my sins—that is, some of them. I am not omniscient, of course. I remembered especially one crime I had committed inadvertently, for which, I had no doubt, I was now being punished. One time, in the far-away years when I went a-lecturing, I was entertained at the home of a friend of mine, in a town in Pennsylvania. He was a minister of the gospel. When I went to my room that night I noticed that his daughters had decorated the prophet's chamber with an endless array of Christmas cards and advertising chromos—a very rainbow of color and a kaleidoscope of design all over the walls. The cards were stuck up with pins. Every inch of space was covered with them. I walked around the room as one would walk about a picture gallery. Then I went to bed and had the nightmare.

I had to take a train at five o'clock the next morning. I refused to permit the family to get up at the unearthly hour at which I would have to arise. I said good-by the night before, and carried the alarm clock to my room. At four-fifteen A. M. I arose. It was dark as Erebus, this county, and I couldn't find the matches. I had a dim recollection of seeing a match-safe on the wall the night before, and went around the room feeling for it. I scraped off a gorgeous snow-storm of picture cards. Round and round that room I went, mowing these resplendent walls with my clawing hands, feeling and hearing the pins and cards rain down about my feet.

Once or twice I made my way to the bureau and picked up a box of hairpins, and inwardly reviled the foolish girls who would put a box of hairpins on a man's dressing table and forget the matches. At last it occurred to me to investigate the box more closely. I opened it. It contained matches. I lighted the lamp and shuddered as I gazed upon those denuded walls. High as my iconoclastic hands could reach there wasn't a pin or a card in sight. And the floor! Strewn with the wreck of the chromatic press

> "Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
> In Vallambrosa."

With wild and guilty haste I thrust myself into my clothes and fled, locking the front door on the outside, lest the family, awaking, should discover what I had done and pursue me.

Once more now the shutter banged with a defiant challenging slam, and by one mighty effort I got to my feet and made my way to the window. With that last crash the shutter had accomplished its mission of distraction. It had fastened itself back so tightly that when I tried to close it next day it came off the hinges.

It was cold in the "den"—oh, very cold. But I could stand the cold. A faint light was kindling the east, and arrowy streaks of gray were shooting across the inky skies. I waited, playing castanet solos with my chattering teeth until the early gleam of a winter morning crept into the room like a ghost of light, and faintly outlined my way to the door.

Then I hopped lightly but stiffly out of the "den" and up to my room, lest my guilty track should betray me, washed the alligator mud off my frozen foot, and crawled into bed to wait for the grippe or pneumonia to come along and finish the expedition for the relief of the Slamrack.

JUST FOR LUCK

DO I believe in luck? Well, if ever a man believed in anything, I believe in luck. That's one thing I'm superstitious about—good luck. The other thing is bad luck. Some men are lucky—I have known them and you have. And we have known other men who were unlucky all their lives. Regular Jonahs, men call them. Lucky and unlucky men. Every trade and profession and calling has them. They begin their career of good or bad luck at school. In the old days when football was so called because it was played with the feet—that is, we kicked the ball instead of one another—I knew a boy who always kicked the ball with his ankle, and so sent it back over his head, against his own side.

Therefore, whenever he got the ball, his friends would shriek frantically, "Turn around. Andy! Turn around!" And Andy, blind to the evil fact that he was born under a malignant star—a whole nebula of adverse fates, in fact—would glare indignantly at us, bid us, in schoolboy vernacular, to "shut up!" face the foe with grim determination on his face, and with one mighty kick make a goal for the enemy. He couldn't help it, his friends said. "Andy's luck," we called it. He did everything backward. It would have done your brain good, that is, it would have done it thoroughly, so to speak, to see him go to the board and prove, with many intersecting chalk lines, that things equal to the same thing were greater than one another.

When he left school he was apprenticed to a carpenter, and always clinched his nails on top. He had a passion for retroactive mechanics, and when, in the first year of the Civil War, he invented a breech-loading cannon, we all said, "That's what we expected Andy would make." And the first time they fired it the charge blew the whole breech-block clean out into unsearchable space, and never spoiled the barrel of the gun. And we all said, in chorus, "Just what we expected!" He went into the army, and one dark night, on a Mississippi transport, he heard a man fall overboard, and instantly leaped in to rescue him. He found him and caught him by the hair. The ungrateful man had jumped overboard to desert. He didn't want to be rescued any more than Emin Pasha, and he caught his preserver by the throat, beat his face into a pulp, nearly drowned him, and got away. "Andy's luck."

And there was another boy, Bud Wright, you remember. When he went a-fishing, Saturdays, he wore the oldest clothes in the crowd, and somehow or other always looked better dressed than the rest of us did when we went to school. If he fell into the creek he always came out looking so much better than before that we had an impression that he did it "a-purpose". If he knew only one paragraph in the lesson, somehow or other that was the one he was questioned on. If there were twenty of us caught out in the rain, with only one umbrella, Bud had the umbrella. When we dug out a bumblebee's nest, the rest of us got stung, and Bud got the honey.

When we broke the court-house window, while throwing stones at a toy balloon that had got away from a weeping "kid", Bud was observed to be standing with his hands in his pockets, while the rest of us held pebbles in our guilty fingers. We were assessed to pay for that window, while Bud, the Lucky, was held up to us as a model of good conduct, and we all liked him so well that even that couldn't make us hate him. He was just "lucky", and no right-hearted boy could blame him or dislike him for that.

If anybody whistled in school, Bud either looked surprised, or was so absorbed in his books that he never looked at all. It was the boy sitting near him who looked frightened and blushed guiltily when he caught the teacher's eye fixed on him like a gimlet. It wasn't that Bud was any better or any worse than the rest of us. He was just "lucky", that was all. And observing Bud and Andy with a boy's eyes, I early acquired an unquestioning belief in luck. The first "sheepshead" I caught in Peoria Lake, I carefully cut the "lucky-stone" out of his head and carried it in my pocket as long as a boy carries anything. To the possession of that talisman I attributed the fact that I was not lost on board the Ocean Spray when that beautiful and popular steamboat burned to the water's edge down at St. Louis, while I was at school, only two hundred miles away. More than once it saved me from death by lightning, because I could put my hand in my pocket and feel it, while the storm was at its height.

Once I tumbled headlong and in arms-and-legs confusion to the ground while climbing a rail fence with a shotgun in my hands, and would undoubtedly have blown the whole top of my head off, but for the fact that my "lucky stone" was in my pocket, and the gun wasn't loaded, I having fired my last charge of powder-and-shot at a wild goose flying beyond the range of a telescope. If there is anything in space that a boy won't shoot at when he is out with a gun, it must be feeding somewhere behind the moon. I lost the "lucky stone" early in 1861. Shortly afterward came the disaster to the Federal arms at Bull Run, and soon after the war I began to write poetry, and then started a daily paper to fill a long-felt want. Small wonder, then, that I have always believed, and do believe, in luck.

As I grew older, I don't think my belief in luck became weaker, but it became established on a more systematic basis. Really, as I studied the examples of lucky and unlucky people, and the instances of good and bad luck that came under my observation, I became more and more confirmed in my belief, or superstition, if your superior wisdom prefer.

I remember that Andy, the Luckless, never thought of anything until after the thing had become an accomplished fact. That he never thought of planning how to do anything, until the emergency and the sudden necessity of doing the thing slammed into his face like a barn door in a gust of wind in the dark. That he did things as a dog jumps over a board fence, with never a thought of the mink trap, muddy ditch, or forty-foot gravel pit on the other side. That he answered every question put to him, quick as a flash, without wondering or guessing what the next question might be. That he sometimes made haste to give what he called his "reasons" when "Yes" or "No" would have been absolutely safe and all sufficient. That he inopportunely proffered his unsolicited services as mediator, in the presence of both combatants, when the fight was hot, with the inevitable result in both. That he habitually bit off more than he could chew. That, like some other distinguished men of a later day, he sometimes went out to fight Dutch Boers with an Indian reputation, and paid a high premium for learning what anybody might have known for nothing—the vast difference between a heathen who dresses in a cotton sheet and pecks rice, like a hen, and a citizen soldier, who wears clothes, says his prayers, and eats beef like a man. That was "Andy's luck."

And this also I began to remember: that Bud, the Lucky, had more plans in his head than a strategy board in time of peace. That it was next to impossible to surprise him, because he had adjustable combinations ready for everything. That in the class, on the days when his firing-line was dangerously thin, he had a way of asking questions that drew attention to himself and his strongest position. That even the teacher should have known that the only boy in school who knew when and whence the whistle was coming would be most innocently prepared for it. That even the lawyers at the courthouse might have known that the boy with his hands full of stones was just going to throw, and the boy with his hands in his pockets had just fired the fatal shot and wasn't going to shoot any more. That when it looked a little bit like rain, Bud carried an umbrella. That when untoward "happenstances" came his way, as they will sometimes come, even to the luckiest boys and men and mice, he made the jolly best of them, until in our eyes they appeared to be actually desirable. That when he wore old clothes, he wore as few of them as possible, and so did not multiply rags by putting a patched jacket on top of a faded shirt, neither did he degenerate apparel by wearing a new smart necktie with it.

He studied the harmony and good taste of the "had been," and he did not commit the crime of putting new cloth on an old garment. He invented and made things for the people who needed them, wanted them, bought and paid for them—not for the government that would make him pay the price of his contract to lobbyists and Congressmen for pushing through a bill to pay him what the government owed him. That was "Bud's luck".

Now, my son, when I see a man who spends all the morning waiting for good "chances" to come along, and all the afternoon wondering why they didn't come to him, instead of stopping with the man who walked three miles to meet them, I say, "There is an unlucky man." And I never miss it.

When a man seven months behind with his rent on a twenty dollar house takes half an hour to tell me that when he came to Los Angeles he could have bought the ground on which the court-house now stands for fifteen dollars, he has no need to add that he is an unlucky man. I know it. Bad luck is his by hereditary right. I knew his father very well. When he went to Denver he could have bought eighty acres right in the heart of the present city for forty dollars. Instead of buying it, he went to another location, ninety miles from water and one hundred and fifty miles from anything, and paid four hundred dollars for a ranch because it reminded him of a farm in Pennsylvania that was believed to have oil on it. And I knew his grandfather. He was the man who could have bought the land in Chicago, now occupied by the Palmer House, for seven dollars. But he preferred to invest his entire capital, eighty-two dollars, in buying the county right for a patent machine a "feller" had, which would tell you where to find water, so'st you could locate a well on any farm. The State of Illinois lay over a subterranean lake; if a man pulled up a beet he opened an artesian well, and the machine didn't pay. That man's whole family was unlucky. You can't blame a man for his inheritance.

When a young man lies in bed till nine o'clock, thinking what he will do when he gets up, I know what he will do the first thing. He will shake hands with the Bad Luck that is waiting for him at the door.

When he is strong enough to sit on a store box for two hours at a time and never take his hands out of his pockets save to scratch his head, a man is unlucky on the face of his paper. When he has been out of work for six weeks, and won't take the job that is offered him because it is too hard, that man is born to adversity, and you can't help it—or him. The man who tells you every time he meets you—and always has leisure to tell it—that all the rest of the men in the shop, instigated by the foreman, are down on him, and are working against him, is an unlucky man, and is going to lose every job he gets. Men usually do combine against an "unlucky man." When a man has a salary of sixty dollars a month and his clothes cost him thirty dollars, his board thirty-eight dollars, and he has to go to the theater with what he can save out of that, he is handcuffed to bad luck. When he tries to make a living by "wishing", his plans are fated to go wrong. If he ships a cargo of ice to the Klondike and a trainload of oranges to California, he is commercially certain to lose money on both speculations. The signs of bad luck, my son, are as plain as the determinations of palmistry, which are infallible, if you have known the man forty-five or fifty years.

The unlucky man starts at two thirty to catch the two twenty-five train, misses it, and says it is "just his luck". So it is. He believes in all signs except the one which says "Keep off the grass;" gets fined five dollars for not observing that one, and says he knew something would happen because a rabbit ran across his path that morning. He forgets to put a stamp on his letter; it goes to the dead letter office, and he loses a deal that would have made him one thousand dollars. Nothing in the world but bad luck. He carries a rabbit foot, instead of a memorandum book, and misses an appointment with the senator which would have got him the post-office; then he tells you he is "the unluckiest beggar on earth". So he is.

He flips a quarter, "head or tail", to decide which one of two ways he shall go, or things he shall do, and sometimes the quarter isn't omniscient, and he goes the wrong way and gets lost, or does the wrong thing, and gets beaten by seven hundred and fifteen majority in a county which gave nine hundred and fifty for all the rest of his ticket. He sees the new moon over the right shoulder, and straightway holds on to the stock he was on his way to sell, and thereafter uses the certificates thereof for a scratch-block. He looks into a building where the sign says "Keep out", to see what the danger is, and a hodful of mortar falls on him. He stands on the wrong side of the street to stop a trolley-car, and it shrieks past him. He talks "autobiographically" to a stranger on the train, and the stranger is a reporter who makes a mighty good story of the unlucky man's family troubles. Oh, my boy, there is no mystery about bad luck. I believe in it; indeed, I do. An unlucky man is a man who does unlucky things.

When a man gets up in the morning, goes out and "shakes himself", Samson-like, looks out upon the world with bright eyes and a clear brain, puts on a working jacket, and says, "I will collar the first thing that comes in sight," that man puts the "come-along" on good luck. When an admiral says, "I will write to the Strategy Board and learn what they think I had better do," his name may be almost anything. But when he doesn't say anything, and steams into a strange harbor, lined with hostile batteries, filled with battleships, mined with torpedoes, and shrouded in night, his name is Dewey. When for every dollar that he puts on his back and into his stomach he puts two into his head, a young man is born to good luck, as the sparks fly upward. When the only sign he believes in is the one that reads "Keep to the right," he is superior to cats, unstable salt-cellars and graveyard rabbits.

When he goes to bed to sleep, rises up to hustle, Fortune just loves to be seen on the street with him. When he sets himself to find what he can best do, and then resolutely sets himself to do it the best he can, he is found to be as lucky as Andrew Carnegie. When, seeing that he can buy the ground on which the court-house is going to stand, he doesn't wait to see the court-house built, but jumps on to the deal with both feet at once, the ground is his when the county commissioners want it, and it will be theirs when he makes them a deed. That's his luck. You don't have to build up a city of two million inhabitants before he can tell where the head of Lake Michigan is—he's "lucky", that's what.

When the boy who sweeps out the office and folds circulars begins to call the entire plant "we", he has found his "lucky stone". And when he refers to the junior partner as "our Mr. Denims", he is on the straight road to become one of "us". He's as lucky as Edison. When he resolves—and sticks to his resolution—that he will save something and give away something every week, he's going to be as lucky as Rockefeller. When a man studies and plans and works with brain and hand and heart for thirty years, and then suddenly "stumbles" upon the secret of an invention that has been his life dream, and which brings him fame and fortune, he's a "lucky" man. Not because he "stumbled" upon the secret in ten seconds by a "lucky accident", but because for thirty years he plodded right straight along toward the only place on earth where that accident could have happened. That's what makes men "lucky"; "lucky" as the man who invented the telescope; the sewing-machine; the steam engine; the telegraph and the telephone.

You will observe, my boy, if you closely and accurately take note of human affairs, that there are two classes of fishermen—the lucky and the unlucky. And always the lucky ones are the ones who know how and where to fish. That's what makes them lucky.

And that's why I believe in luck, my boy. When a man gets the reputation of being an "unlucky man", in business, in war, or in politics, men shun him. Not because these level-headed, clear-thinking business men, or these straightforward, hard-hitting soldiers, or these shrewd, worldly-wise, crafty politicians are at all superstitious. But because they know that "an unlucky man" is simply a man who can't be trusted. That he is either lazy, or stupid, or light-headed, or irresponsible. They know that he isn't well-balanced. That's all there is to an "unlucky" reputation, my son. It isn't that he is a Jonah, but that he isn't. Jonah was all right. True, when he did exactly what he knew very well he had no business to do, when he ran away from his duty and made himself "unlucky", he endangered the safety of a ship and a score of sailors.

But he had the good sense and good conscience—which make any man "lucky"—to ask the sailors to toss him overboard, which is always the best thing to do with an "unlucky man", and then he went ashore and saved the great city of Nineveh with its hundreds of thousands of people from destruction. Jonah may have been an unpleasant man to have on board a little ship—some very good people are—but he was a mighty good man to have in town. Don't let me hear you say that you are "a Jonah", my boy, bringing bad luck to everything you touch, until I have heard you preach once or twice. If I can just see you bring all the sinners in your town to their knees, I shall be willing to admit that you are entitled to be called a Jonah.

A great many people, my boy, know nothing whatever concerning Jonah, save his maritime experiences and his encounter with the whale. They are "unlucky" in their reading, that's all.

Is isn't "unlucky" to lose your way, my boy. It's unlucky to keep right on in that road after you've found out it's the wrong one. It isn't "unlucky" to make mistakes. It's "unlucky" to keep on making the same mistakes over and over, when all the time you know it's a mistake. It isn't so unlucky to be bitten by a dog. But, my dear boy, it's deadly bad luck to buy a dog and keep him—to bite you. My son, you're one of the luckiest fellows on this planet, if you'll only work for good luck.

IN THE SLAVE MARKET

THE prophet Amos, with whose writings, I take it, all my readers are slightly, very slightly indeed, acquainted, speaks of a time, some two thousand and six hundred years ago, when certain dealers in human chattels said—impatiently waiting for the close of divine service and the opening of the market—"When will the new moon be gone, that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes?" There were hard times for the needy when they were going as cheaply as that, and the poor must have been, even in those ancient days, a drug in the market. This traffic in living human beings, what the terminology of the market would probably call "Man on the hoof", is a very ancient trade, one of the oldest gilds in the world, probably. And it is far more universal than the chattels like to believe.

I have been sold—sometimes very cheaply, although, I suppose, it was all I was worth; at least, I am certain that I brought all I would fetch, I have gone into the market, a buyer sometimes, going forth in the morning to buy what the dictionary calls a horse, but which the dealer invariably terms a "hoss"; and I have returned at the going down of the sun the worst-sold man that ever fell into the hands of an honest "hoss-trader". True, at the same time, I had bought a "hoss"—but we will not speak of that now; "there are chords in the human heart—"

One day, after I had been most cruelly sold by a very funny man who carried about on his person more cells than there are also in the honey and the honeycomb, and not one of them filled with sweetness, pondering upon this brutal traffic in the delicate sensibilities and organic life of man, it occurred to me, as it had occurred to everybody else long, long before it occurred to me to think of it, that this traffic in humanity was merely an evolution of trade; that we had bought and sold everything else in the world for so many generations that at last we fell into the way of buying and selling one another merely to keep our hands in—in and out, that is, of one another's pockets. But when I came to look the matter up I began to think that I was far, far away from the safe environment of my base, with the ball in the hostile hands of an agile infielder which, as a rule, is my habitual position long before the game begins to grow interesting.

I suppose that men did buy and sell other things long ago; I can not see how Cain builded the city of Enoch without at least two eligible corners—one for the grocery and post-office, and the other for the drug store. Tubal Cain must have had a market for his justly-celebrated iron and brass foundry. "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and gold," and all the farmers tell us that a man will starve to death in a very few years on a farm, and the stockmen assure us that the cattle business is nothing but a respectable annex to the almshouse. Therefore, Abraham must have made his wealth in some other way. Moreover, his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen quarreled, and money has been at the root of all the quarrels between property owners since the world began, somewhere and some way. All the land Abraham had in the world was given to him, until he bought the field of Machpelah, and long before that we read that he had members of his household not born in his house, but "bought with money, of the stranger."

Verily, men and sisters, we are marketable chattels unto this day, measurable by the sheckels of the merchant, even as were our fathers before us. Small wonder that the late lamented Boss Tweed asked concerning every man: "What is his price?" It's in the blood of the race.

One thing about the men or women who are purchasable: they are such merchandise as was real estate in old Judea, which could not be sold forever. Not that there is any year of redemption for the fellow you buy; oh, no, but you have to keep on buying him! It's like cornering oats: you have to keep on buying all of him that offers all the time, to corner the market of him. A mercenary he; not a free-born citizen, nor even a naturalized one in our little world enterprise.

You hire him as you do the band to play in the Republican procession to-day, the Democratic tomorrow, the Populist rally the next day, the Prohibition convention the day after that. And he blows his horn for you—you providing the horn—just as cheerfully, and pounds the resounding echoes out of the big bass drum just as lustily for your cause, so long as you pay him, as he will for the enemy to-morrow. Does not make any difference to the trumpeter; that's what the band is organized for. "I care not who make the laws of the country," remarks the drum-major, "if only I may play for the processions." And the more brass there is in the man, the more noise he can make, the more surely is he in the market—empty as the drum, to be sure, but quite as useful in the procession.

Sometimes you buy the man to make a noise about some things, and keep silent about others. That is done every year. "The needy man?" Oh, by no means, no! Not so very needy. You can't buy him for a pair of shoes. Not new shoes, anyhow. Sometimes if you will let him stand in another man's shoes, that will do. Very often that is the price he sets upon himself. So, after all, men have not appreciated in market value very much since the days of Amos. And, singular as it may seem to you, the man who sells himself for a pair of shoes—old second-hand shoes at that—is not very particular as to the fit. No indeed. In fact, he is apt to bargain for a pair much too large for him.

When you go into the market and buy a pigmy for a pair of shoes you take notice next time and see if he does not specify the shoes of a giant. The bigger they are the better he likes them. The small politician always asks for the shoes of a statesman; the ward heeler must have the place of some good, honest, respectable, clear-headed citizen in the City Council; the woman who can't manage her own children wants to "run" the convention; the man whose farm was sold under two mortgages wants to be land commissioner; the man who failed in business for eighteen cents on the dollar wants you to indorse his application for a position in the Treasury Department. After Cromwell, Charles II.; after Napoleon, Louis Philippe; after the thunder-storm, the drizzle; after the flood, the mud.

Nevertheless, although the man who sells himself always wants more for himself than he is worth—and always gets it—it remains an indisputable fact that he is perishable merchandise. He deteriorates rapidly. Nothing in the market gets so quickly shelf-worn; nothing so quickly shows the dust and finger-marks and grime of handling. As soon as it becomes known that he can be bought he becomes cheaper. He is like furniture—the slightest scratch or stain marks him down "second-hand". Cheaper and cheaper he becomes until, at last, he stands in the market-place with his price, "plainly printed on a tag", pinned to the lapel of his coat. And men who are buyers in the market laugh as they pass him by, looking for a higher-priced article that will last a campaign or two longer. It is an old curse, this of deterioration, upon the marketable people. Moses spake it in the law: "Ye shall be sold for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you."

Somehow or other, too, disguise it as they will, buyer and seller alike being anxious to keep it secret, everybody comes to know the chattel. There used to be, a few years ago—is now, for that matter—a class of bright clever entertainers who have such a gift of natural happiness and gaiety that they are frequently hired—that is, employed—I mean, they are invited, under the persuasive flattery of a "complimentary stipend"—to attend dinner-parties and other social functions, there to make merry for the host and his friends at so much per function. Mr. Merryman attends in his court dress—the solemn livery of the gentleman and the head waiter—fills all the dull and narcotic pauses with the spirit of mirthfulness, shortens the hours and promotes digestion. He bids his host good night, and under the friendly hand-shake the grateful check is pressed into his well-deserving palm, and the guests, glowing into good feeling under the influence of his sunny words and manner, say as they roll homeward: "What a pleasant home to visit!"

But before long so many people got to maintaining court jesters by the night that the illusion of the guest habit was dispelled. So that many times an innocent guest who happens to be endowed by nature with a mirthful spirit, and "keeps things going" merrily, is looked upon with dark suspicion, and is secretly believed to be in the pay of the common enemy, the host.

In politics, in religion, in parties and organizations of any character, the purchased man is often recognized by the fact that while he makes a little more noise than do the retainers "to the manner born," he always waits for a signal. He never erupts naturally, like a volcano bursting out upon the world, fed by its own soul-hidden fires; not burning out, but blazing away now and again, always keeping you in lively anticipation of another eruption, scattering lava on this side, cinders to the other, flames to the skies, and ashes everywhere. No, the boughten man goes off at the proper time, like a carefully-tamped charge in a stone quarry, or a load in a cannon, fired with friction primer, electric wire, or time fuse—Boom! Then you must load him up again.

So many people you see as you pass along the way, with their price-tags on. It is said, so quietly that perhaps you have never heard the gossipy whisper, that some of them are office-holders—politicians or statesmen, as you choose. At any rate, for some reason or other, men have got into the habit of treating the phrase, "honest election", as a jest. Orators on the rostrum, like the augurs in the

Roman temples, pay homage to honesty, and honor, and patriotism, and integrity, and truth, with averted faces, stifling the lurking laughter, and the tongue in the cheek.

Masculine horror and disgust at the shameless sale of women for establishment and title, for wealth and position, have been on tap for, lo, these many years, until it began to be believed in some circles that only women could be had in the world's market. It is now, however, suspected by several thoughtful observers that a buyer with plenty of ready money or good appointments might pick up a man or two for spot cash, if he got up right early and went out shaking the trees before anybody else had been there. It is thought by some that when women take a hand in practical politics this sort of traffic will be reformed, if not entirely stopped. Well, maybe! Maybe! Sometimes it does work that way. Sometimes it doesn't.

During the Seven Years' War, the great Silesian wars of Frederick the Great, the war that dug graves for nearly a million men, once and again, men, tired of war, prayed for peace. But three women in politics—Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Pompadour of France—wanted more war; so the war and the grave-digging went on. This sort of things isn't a matter of sex. While the world stands we shall never get through the discussion of a question forever open: "Who was the more to blame, Adam or Eve?"

The Three Graces are offset by the Furies, also women, every one of them. And all the angels in the Bible are men. There is nothing in all this world a daughter of Eve resembles so closely as a son of Adam. You would think they belonged to the same race, as sometimes I am inclined to think they do—by marriage, at least. It can, perhaps, be partially accounted for by the fact that daughters usually inherit the traits of the father, while boys are more apt to derive their manly qualities from their mother.

But then, again, some day you may have pressing need for a man or woman—crying need; you must have one, and one of the right kind; solid, no veneer, pure gold, no tinsel, no pinchbeck article. Then, when you get to the market-place, you learn something about men and women—a truth a little deeper than all the surface froth and driftwood. No use wasting your time in the market-place, jingling your money in your hand, when you are searching for that kind of woman or man. That is an article you can't buy—not with money. The woman "whose price is far above rubies" isn't standing in the market-place, tagged with her quality and price. Her husband is known in the gates, but "she looketh well to the ways of her household"; "her children rise up and call her blessed", for they see a great deal more of their mother than they do of a French nurse with a Galway accent.

There is something that can't be bought with money, or title, fame or flattery, or threat; a real man and a real woman—so far above all price that you can get them for nothing, if only you have a need that is worthy of their labor, their thought, their voice. Many of them? Oh, plenty! At least "seven thousand—all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." But you will have to look for them at their work; you'll not find them idling about the market-place. That's one reason why they are so hard to find.

Diogenes, hunting about the streets at noonday with his lighted lantern, looking for an honest man, was never farther away from one than at that very time, although he was carrying the lantern himself. He wasn't honest, not even with himself. He knew very well that the man for whom he was looking was not loafing about the streets.

WASTING OTHER PEOPLE'S TIME

TIME was when all the world, having so much longer to live than it now hath, went at its own sweet will in its own long way. When a man made up his mind to be a patriarch and live as many years as we do months in these degenerate, "brisk and giddy-paced times", he made haste for naught; he went to bed when the stars came out, arose and made his ablutions without soap or water when the sun lighted the side of his tent. When he traveled he walked; where he pitched his tent at night, there he lived. When he married he was a duke; when his first baby was born that made him a king; and when his eldest son married he became a patriarch, raised a beard, quit hurrying and took things quietly for the next five or six generations.

Although there was nobody else in all the world except himself and his immediate neighbors, he took not the slightest interest in any part of the globe save his own pasture-lands, and he would spend three months digging a well for his stock when there was a river not five miles farther on. He usually traveled in a circle in order to get back to the place whence he started. The ass of the Orient was his baggage train, and the camel was his trolley, but he preferred walking because it was so much slower and took him so much longer to go from Haran to Sichem. A man who was going to live seven or eight hundred years had to figure on some way of putting in his time, and if he hurried and made all haste day by day he never would get through with his spare time.

But times are different since they were changed, and a noticeable variation of things and ways has come in with the universal mutation of matters terrestrial. We have about as much to do as had our fathers, but we have far less time to do it in. Wherefore, this year let us turn over a new leaf. If the new one isn't handy the same old one will do quite as well. It got turned back again, just about a year ago, three or four days after we turned it over.

Let us lay our hands upon our respective hearts and solemnly resolve: That we will not waste the time for other people. Now that is good resolution enough for one year; certes, if we can stick to that for a good twelvemonth, then for years to come a white square on the calendar will mark the light and prosperous footprint of the year nineteen hundred and whatever it was.

For of a truth I do not believe that even people who are prodigal with the minutes, wasteful of the hours and spendthrifts with the days, are given overmuch to squandering that which is their own. Were that the head and front of their offending, no word of censure or rebuke should they hear from this mild and gentle-spoken pulpit. But never yet knew I man or woman reckless of time in any way, who scrupled at all to use ten minutes of your precious time to one of his own idle leisure.

So frequently had I observed this thing, in the years of my pilgrimage, that at one time I resolved that I would never again make the slightest effort to be punctual, save only in the matter of observing an appointment with a railway train, which loitereth not for any man but is gone as a shadow goes even at the stroke of time. Who is it that most suffers by reason of the leisurely ways of the sluggard? The sluggard? By no means. Rather the man or woman who waiteth for him. The man who riseth at five, intending to breakfast at six, but is compelled to wait until seven-thirty for the sluggard —he is the man who wastes precious time, or rather, who hath it wasted for him by the snores of the sluggard. The wasters of time, under compulsion, are the punctual people. They waste it, this priceless commodity, waiting for the good-natured people who come loitering along by and by—"So sorry to have kept you waiting"—a mild type of sorrow which causes not the slightest agony to the sufferer; a sorrow that leadeth never to repentance.

Eight o'clock is the advertised hour for lectures and various entertainments the world over. I doubt very much if, in all the thousands of lectures which will be poured out upon the long-suffering American people this year, a dozen will begin at the advertised time. Anywhere between the hour set and fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes later, the chairman will arise and forget his speech of introduction and get the initials of the speaker wrong. Often the lecture announced for eight o'cleck begins at eight-forty. And by that time the punctual people, who were in their places at seven-thirty, want to go home.

Don't talk to me about the virtue of punctuality. I know all about the boy who came to the bank to apply for the position of cashier and got the place because he was so punctual, and married the president's daughter, and went into stocks and "got a twist" on the old man and became president himself. I know all about him. Read about him in my book when I was missing my lessons every day at school. Believed it, too, until I got to be about forty years older; then I grew a little skeptical.

That story is one of the childish things I put away. That boy came down to the bank about six o'clock in the morning, and hung around until nearly eleven, before it dawned upon him that Good Friday was a bank holiday. The next day he came down in the afternoon and found that Saturday half holiday was observed by all the banks in all civilized lands. Then he came down bright and early Monday morning and learned that the other boy had met the vice-president at the baseball game Good Friday afternoon, and fixed it up with him when he was in high good humor and got the "job". Don't talk to me about punctuality; it is a bond-slave to cunctation. The family that comes late to the lecture always has its seats at the other end of the row, that it may trample on your feet, climb over your knees and scrape every bonnet in the front row out of place as it scrambles in. This is to punish you for your inflated conceit about being on time.

The man who comes late to church always times his untimely arrival so as to smother the text. Oh, beloved, when you loiter it isn't your own time you are wasting; that probably isn't worth even wasting. But think of the time belonging to other people, who have in life some work to do other than merely to sit around in uncomfortable and dismal places waiting for you.

If I were a Populist, a Socialist and an Anarchist all boiled down into one, I should still be grateful to the railway, monopoly or not, for teaching people habits of punctuality, and enforcing its doctrine. It has been and is the greatest missionary of punctuality ever sent into this irregular old world. People—even the people who start late and arrive later on all other occasions—never go to the station at nineteen, expecting thereby to take the train leaving at nine-five. Oh, they do, once, perhaps twice; some very thick-headed people try it a third time. And in every community there is at least one family that makes it its habit and part of its religion to do this as long as it lives. You know the family; it isn't necessary to mention names; as the immortal "Sairey" says, "Namin' no names, no offense can be took."

But the vast majority of people learn the railway method of doing business and time their movements by the big clock in the station. The great apostle of tardiness, on the other hand, is the steamboat. The hours I have passed in lonely but splendidly-ventilated wharf-boats on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers waiting for a boat that was expected along sometime before the river ran by, could I have them put together, would give me ample time to collect and spend my own endowment life insurance.

Now this is an age of organization. We do everything in the way of reform by organized work; nothing goes but concerted action; we have societies for everything that we want done, and don't care to undertake on our individual responsibility. If, therefore, the young people—both because this is the young people's year, as have been all years that ever were, and will be all the years that are to come, and because the old folk are possibly too "sot" in their ways to be moved (this is not true; it is merely assigned as an impossible reason to keep the other one company; the old folk are the methodical, systematic and punctual class; the less time a man has, the more careful with it is he)—if the young people, then, would only postpone for another year the organization of the "Society for Providing Book-marks for People Who Lose Their Places and Can't Remember How Far They Read," and organize a "Society for Punctuality," about eighteen months of good work in all lines of human Thought, with a big T, and activity with a little a, might be done this year.

"It is never too late to mend," but what is the use of smashing things early in order to mend them later? Let us be punctual this one year of our lives;

let us go to church on time; let us pay our bills promptly; let us have family prayers before we go to bed, and get up every morning before breakfast; let us keep our engagements or break them altogether. Let's!

There is an old adage, "Better late than never." However, that depends. Napoleon, we are told, was fifteen minutes late beginning the battle of Waterloo, and that quarter of an hour wrote "Finis" to the empire and opened a chapter entitled "Saint Helena." Woudn't "never" have answered the purpose quite as well, especially to the few thousands of Frenchmen and Englishmen who never went anywhere after that battle, but stayed right there at Mount Saint Jean, in the awful sunken road at La Hain, or wherever they happened to be at the moment when Time, with all its hours and quarters, went out forever?

Isn't "late" very often the same thing as "never"? The man who decided that he would go aboard the ark for a cruise of a day or two anyhow, the morning it began to rain—was "late" any better than "never" to that fellow? The "reprieve" that comes galloping and foaming and shouting along, just as the deserter falls on his face and the smoke from the muskets of the firing party goes wreathing up over him—how much better is that "late" than "never"? The five foolish virgins in the Good Book weren't so very late, but "the door was shut" just the same, and they might as well have postponed that trip to the house where the wedding feast was held. They would, at least, have saved some weariness of walking. I don't suppose their time was worth saving, then. The man who comes rushing up to the bank door five minutes after business hours will find that note protested next morning just as thoroughly as though he had gone to the circus and enjoyed himself. The man who fires himself down the float to see the ferry-boat only fifteen feet away from the slip will wait for the next boat, which will miss his train, which will put off his wedding one day, which will make her so "mad" she will marry the other man.

Did you ever write a letter to a dear friend whom you had somewhat neglected of late because of a multitude of swarming duties, and receive the shock of a telegram before your letter was half-way to its destination, telling you in the cold official crispness of the wires, that letters and silence, kisses or frowns were all alike to the dead friend at peace with everybody? "Better late than never!" It is the psalm of the tardy man, the golden text of the loiterer, the creed of the negligent.

The late man comes just in time to misunderstand all that is being said, because he doesn't know what the convention has been saying and doing before he came in. He is good for nothing save to mix things up, to tangle suggestions and misconstrue motions, and, true to his habit of delay, he impedes business so continually by his repeated demands for information on things which are clear to everybody else, that all the rest of the delegates, who came on time, heartily wish he had never come since he must come late.

The woman who comes late to concert, theater, lecture or what not, mars the pleasure of her punctual neighbor by whispering for all manner of information: "Who is she?" "What number are they playing now?" "Where are they at?"

"How much have I missed?" "Which is Madame Hiskreechi?" "Will you let me look at your program, please?" In a little radius of half a dozen chairs in all directions around her, punctual people are devoutly wishing she had fallen down-stairs and broken her necktie, and so remained at home with the world at least at peace with her. I tell you, my children, "late" isn't so very much better than "never" in many, many instances, and ofttimes it is the same thing. That is why we speak of a dead man as "the late" Mr. So-and-So. And the late man, in many, many instances, is not any better, so far as his usefulness is concerned on that particular occasion, than a dead man.

It isn't that you are in people's way; it isn't that your friendship isn't dear, your companionship delightful, your presence as welcome as roses in December. Because it is. We can't see enough of our friends. Two of the best friends I have on this earth I can sit beside, and if we feel like it, converse by the half-hour with, without saying a word. We never get in each other's way, and we are never conscious of trying to avoid so doing. We never steal each other's time, any more than the sunshine crowds anything or anybody in the room when it fills it.

Let us respect the property of other people this year, then—the most valuable, alas, the only property some of us possess—Time. Let us bear in mind that it is just as easy to be early as it is to be late; that it is economy of time to do all the hurrying—if one must hurry—in the first quarter of the hour, rather than at the last; that any one can get anywhere on time, if only he starts on time; that the sun set when the almanac said it would because it rose on time. Let us rise and repeat in unison the golden text: "Resolved, that we will not waste the time of other people."

AS IT IS WRITTEN

A COMPOSITE PROBLEM NOVELETTE

CALLIOPE BROADLICKS arose from the divan where she had been reclining, walked to the window and gazed at the sky.

"Those cirro-cumulous clouds," she said, "usually portend a low pressure over corresponding areas of higher depression in similar altitudes; if we do not have rain there will be a long dry spell. What were you saying, Langshanks?" she continued, turning to a young man of forty-eight, who remained kneeling in a constrained attitude at the side of the divan, momentarily resting himself upon the heels of his toothpick shoes, which converged under his weight like a trestle. Calliope Broadlicks wore square toes and flat heels herself, else she could not have used the dictionary language so fluently.

"I was saying," he replied, turning so as to bring the young woman into view, "that I loved you dearly, fondly, devotedly; that I would—"

"I know you to be a man of veracity," said Calliope. "It is merely necessary, therefore, that you make a simple statement of what may be termed your feelings, without the addition of the bombastic verbiage of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. I also love you; at least, I feel a certain psychical affinity for you. But you must not speak to me of marriage. I am going to marry Dachshund Sweinfurst."

"But," exclaimed the young man in astonishment, "I thought you hated him."

"I detest him," replied Calliope, "I shudder with unutterable loathing when he approaches me. But for that reason I must marry him. We do not begin to live until we begin to suffer. I shall suffer; then I shall live."

"But Sweinfurst—?" began young Langshanks breathlessly.

"He also will suffer," said Calliope. "I will see to that. Then his life will be transformed, and I shall love him."

"I am dumb with grief," moaned the young man. "And when are you to be married?"

"The next time I see him," Calliope replied; "because I can not live without you much longer."

"Oh, I see! And after marriage, then?"

"I am coming to live with you. Why, otherwise, should I marry Dachshund Sweinfurst?"

"But," protested the young man feebly, with a cloud of bewilderment gathering upon his brow, "would it not, then, be better to marry me in the first place?"

"And live without a motive?" she answered impatiently. "Langshanks, you have no soul. You are a back number. You would calmly sit down and sink our lives in a stagnant pool of dull respectability, live decently and honestly as our grandfathers did, and bring children into the world who would not emigrate and change their names as soon as they were old enough to know anything about us? And I thought you were a man whom I could love!" she cried, clenching her hands until the nails printed themselves upon the palm. "Oh, what a fool I have been!"

"Darling!" he cried, "I—"

"Don't call me names!" she menaced him with her flashing eyes. "Do you know what I am going to do with you? I am going to make you as utterly miserable as I myself will be; I will embitter your life with undeserved sorrow; I will cloud your ways with defeat and despair; I will fill your cup with disappointment, and then will you learn to love me as I deserve to be loved."

II

"TWO FOR THE SHOW"

"And this is our home?" Calliope gazed about the shabby room with a disappointed air. It was plainly but not ostentatiously furnished with the trunk which she had taken the foresight to bring with her. There had been a bedstead in the corner, but Langshanks had broken up all the slats for firewood.

"Doctor Lierbier says, in his *Evolution of the Family,* that nothing in this world has brought so much unhappiness and misery into homes as movable bed slats," Langshanks remarked explanatorily.

"Langshanks," she said, with a bitter smile, "you are suspicious, ungenerously suspicious." And then she added: "This is not like the home which I have left to come to you."

"No," he said, "I fancy it is not. You lived in the lap of elegant luxury, I know."

"Yes," she said, "I was smothered with affluence. Is this the only room you have?"

"It is," replied Langshanks, "and there isn't another one to be had in this building. I selected this location to checkmate any move on the part of your mother toward domiciling herself with us."

"You crossed a bridge before you came to it, then," she responded with the calmness of one who is conscious of being correct. "My mother disapproved of the step I was about to take in coming here, and I poisoned her last week."

"Good enough!" cried Langshanks. "Did she leave you anything?"

"Nothing but her burial money—seventy-five dollars. She had an old-fashioned notion that she would like to be buried in a mahogany coffin."

"Nonsense," replied the young man. "I can get her cremated at the gas works for five dollars. Gimme the spuds."

He took the money and went out. He did not return for three days. And when he did come home he was carrying a full-flavored jag, all wool and a yard wide, on both shoulders. He fell all the way down-stairs with it twice before he got half-way up once. And at last, with the philosophical indifference of a man who does not know what he is doing, and doesn't care how he does it, he fell asleep on the landing outside the door. His trance lasted until the following morning. Then, entering his room, he found it empty. A note wrapped on the handle of the water-pitcher (pronounced jug) attracted his wandering gaze. It was written in Calliope's well-known advanced chirography, diagonally across the paper, eight or ten words to the page, no date, and the signature crowded off to the top of the table.

"'I have gone to live with your uncle, George Meadowlark. I shall be sorry if this step gives you pain, but that will be good for both of us. Moreover, it will teach you not to lie around the house all day, and to give a woman some little time to herself.

Your Uncle George is secretary of the Society for the Higher Domesticity of the Homes of the Upper Middle Classes; consequently I will not see him at home oftener than twice or three times a month, when he will want a clean shirt.

"P. S.—The key is under the door-mat. When you go out, leave some milk in a saucer for the cat. Bow the shutters, and be sure you leave the fly screens in."

Langshanks caught himself by the hair with both hands and led himself up and down the room several times.

"This will break my heart!" he exclaimed hoarsely. Presently he added: "And I believe that is the only thing about me that isn't broke."

He paused in his restless pacing, felt in all his pockets, turning them inside out, amid a little shower of broken cigars, cloves, bits of chalk, and general débris.

"Nit!" he exclaimed, as the investigation closed and the committee rose, "I fear me that I will dine at the sign of the Barmecide, and visit the pump for my bracer. I will go to Dachshund Sweinfurst, and tell him that his wife has basely deserted me, and that I am a deeply injured man. This should create between us a bond of mutual sympathy. It seems to me that he is bound either to give me the satisfaction of a man of honor, or offer some reparation to my lacerated feelings. However, he is not a man of much soul, and it may be that the events which have succeeded his marriage have disturbed him. He always impressed me as a man who was born with emotions, and had not acquired sufficient poise to eradicate them from his system."

III

"THREE TO MAKE READY"

"Why do you drive a one-eyed horse, George Meadowlark?" asked Calliope on one of those rare occasions when she met her new husband, and went driving with him to render the occasion less irksome and irritating.

"I did not always do so," replied George Meadowlark, reaching toward the whip with a tenderness that was habitual with him; "but one day last week the brute shied at a road roller and I burned his eye out with a red-hot poker. If he shies at anything on the other side I will gouge his other eye out with a nail grab, and then he will quit his foolishness. Brute or human, woman or man," he added, pinning Calliope with his steel-gray eyes, "no living creature wants to monkey with your Uncle George when he has his war-paint on. Do you remark yonder wretch with one ear, slinking around the corner to avoid my gaze?" he continued.

Calliope saw the man, who was wearing crutches and had his head bandaged. "I see him," she said, perceiving that evasion was useless.

"Well," said George Meadowlark, "he was a case brought before our society. He has a splendid wife; one of the most grandly unselfish and progressive women in this universe. She had been married but five times when she met this fellow and bestowed herself upon him. Well, I went to their house and found him making gruel for a sick child when his wife was pining for a trip to Catalina Island. I beat him with a brass-handled poker until I left him the wreck you see, and we have had no trouble with him since."

"George Meadowlark!" exclaimed Calliope, moved beyond control by an impulse she could not explain, "I love you!"

"Rats!" said George Meadowlark.

And Calliope worshiped him.

"Here," she said to her wondering heart, "is the man in all the world for me."

IV

"AND FOUR FOR TO GO!"

Calliope reflectively tapped the sole of the long-pointed shoe she held in her hand with the end of her blacking brush.

"George Meadowlark is a king of men," she said —"a strong womanly man, with one weakness. He is the vainest masculine woman that ever wore bloomers. I will make his shoes fit him a little more fondly than ever they did, and that will distract his mind so that he will not feel my departure so keenly.

For I have it in my mind to go back to Dachshund Sweinfurst, and see how he stacks up since his successor crowded him on to the reef."

Thus speaking, she poured into the shoes a prescription from her own formula of mucilage, vox hooperup, clamavi extravagans and stuff caloricus. Then she went out and walked in the direction of her old home, saying: "George will not at science laugh when that impression by both feet takes of him a lead-pipe cinch, once.

"I am so glad," she communed with herself as she walked, "that we all live so near to one another. I must pass Langshanks' door. I will drop in and ask him to accompany me if he likes. I wish that he and my husband might be friends."

Edouard Langshanks was at home. He was hard at work on his new poem, *The Incarnation of Purity,* but he at once dismissed the typewriter, turned his cuffs and was ready to accompany Calliope.

"I shall be glad to go," he said. "I have called on Dachshund Sweinfurst but once since your second marriage. He did not say he was glad to see me, nor did he say that he was not. He leaned out of a second-story window when he heard my voice at the front door, shot at me twice, and started down the fire-escape; but I did not wait. I so dislike scenes."

"Who is that female creature?" asked Calliope, coldly eying the departing figure of the typewriter, who was perhaps sixteen years younger than herself, rather prettier, and much better dressed.

Langshanks made no reply, and Calliope continued: "I do not like her. I should think, Edouard Langshanks, if you had no pride in yourself you might have sufficient respect for me not to employ a female amanuensis."

"But," gasped the astonished Langshanks, "you—"

"It is not a question of me," she said severely. "I once loved you. That should be forever an inspiration, a guide, and a restraint for you, in this world and in the next. If you retain that girl in your employ, I will come back and live with you myself. After, of course, I have reconciled Sweinfurst to my coming back to him."

Edouard Langshanks shuddered.

"She goes," he muttered hoarsely.

As they stood at the door of the Sweinfurst mansion the master of the house suddenly burst forth on them and laid hold of Langshanks by the throat with one hand while he felt for his knife with the other.

"Dachshund Sweinfurst," said Calliope, with a disgust she was ill able to dissemble, "I always detested you; I hated you from my first sight of you. If you continue acting in this emotional manner it will end in my disliking you."

At that instant a distraction occurred. George Meadowlark came leaping and prancing down the street. His face was livid with agony and he shrieked as he bounded into the little group.

"George Meadowlark," said Calliope calmly, "control yourself. Are you aware that you impress every one who sees you with the belief that you are giving way to your feelings?"

But George Meadowlark grasped her by the hair, which unexpectedly held fast, and beat her brains out upon the door-step, while Dachshund Sweinfurst was cutting the heart out of Edouard Langshanks.

As he rose from the completion of this hasty and ill-advised act, George Meadowlark leaped upon him with both feet and caved his ribs in before he could say the multiplication table. He then closed this unseemly exhibition of emotion by falling downstairs backward and breaking his neck.

V

"JUMP!"

"Do they all come in?" asked one of the angels who escorted the mis-assorted quartet to the gates of pearl.

And the bearers wiped the beaded perspiration from their brows, for it was the heaviest load they had carried to Heaven since Robert Browning brought in Judas Iscariot with a martyr's crown on his head.

"Yes," replied Saint Peter, "bring them all in; that's the amended constitution. Somehow or other, some way or other, some time or other, it all comes around kind of right, and everybody who has been wicked enough to deserve it gets in here on equal terms. It's all right."

"How about the other place, then?" asked one of the angelic messengers.

"Oh," replied the saint, "haven't you heard? Everything is changed down below; fires banked; lake boarded over for a skating rink; and they are getting up the scenery for a long run with *Trilby, Hearts Insurgent* and *Casa Braccio.* Bring them in."

As the happy shades passed inside, a gaunt hollow-eyed missionary, who had died of starvation, jungle-fever, and tiger-bite in the heart of a wilderness of heathendom, where he had preached and wrought for thirty-seven years, tried to get in with them. But the saint firmly, although not unkindly, barred his way.

"Now, see here, my friend," he said kindly, "don't you know this won't do at all? You've been told that often enough." Turning to the angel who accompanied the man, he said: "This fellow has been making trouble on the earth all his life; he has combated some of the oldest notions and hoariest religions; he has disturbed men's consciences and unsettled their convictions and distracted their minds until whole communities among the most cultured and progressive districts in western China, the Congo Valley and central Tartary have cried out against him, to say nothing of New York and Chicago.

"Why, I've known men killed when I was on the earth for preaching the very doctrines this man has been teaching. We can't have him in here. Those people who just went in wouldn't stay with us ten minutes if we began letting in preachers, Sunday-school teachers, and that sort of people. Now, go away," he continued, turning to the disappointed applicant, "that's a good fellow; go back to the earth if you can't do any better, and see if you can't get a chance to try it over again. Then you can get rid of your old-fashioned notions, adopt progressive ideas, run away with another man's wife, let the heathen alone, and commit enough deviltry to entitle you to some sort of recognition here on the modern basis."

And the gate closed in the missionary's face.

TALKING WITH THE MOUTH

SAID the wisest Teacher in all history, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The average man tells his business, his ambitions, his politics, his plans, when he is most anxious to conceal them, by the very language of his denial. I recall an incident during the siege of Vicksburg; two scouts from Grant's army were stopped by a Confederate patrol east of the Black River, in an enemy's lines. "Where are you going?" was the challenge. "To Black River Bridge," replied the Union scout. The questioner turned to his comrades. "He's a Yank," he said, and they nodded, and led him away to be shot. All the Union soldiers called that crossing "Black River Bridge." All the southerners generalized it as "the Big Black." "Shibboleth" didn't go out of use in the days of the Judges.

A man has no need to declare in one word the political party with which, brain and hand and soul, he is affiliated. You have no need to talk politics with him to ascertain that much. You enter into a general conversation with him. You carefully avoid politics, because you are strangers, and you don't want the journey made disagreeable by a political wrangle. You begin by cautiously approving the weather—not absolutely and unqualifiedly indorsing it, but in a general way, as a mere creature of this planet, admitting that in a record extending over seven thousand years, the Almighty has measured out rain and sunshine to the insuring of annual crops, with regular harvests ample for the needs of all his creatures, from man to sparrows.

And the stranger cordially approves the weather. His eyes shine when you talk wheat, and he tells you what he got for his. A smoking mill-stack suggests labor, and he talks enthusiastically about that, because one of his boys is earning five dollars a day in a steel mill, and the other is master machinist in some railroad shops. They have an easier time than he had, he says, but their hands are just about as hard as his, though not so knobby. And he had a much better time than their grandfather had. He rejoices to think how much easier and better labor-saving machinery has made life for the worker. The sunshine is full of blessing for him. The clouds are big with promise. He is glad to think that in its thirty million dollars' worth of products one year, Southern California could count only six million dollars from the gold-mines. He says we only need gold enough to pay for what we grow and make.

The train runs by a foul nest of hobos, lounging under the shadow of a water-tank, waiting for a freight train to come along that they may "beat" their way to the next feeding place. In reply to your sympathetic remark that there is so much poverty and misery in the world, he replies that he must have fed about fifty of those fellows last year, when he was crying for men to work on his ranch. He adds that if anybody in his neighborhood went hungry for one day, nobody knew of it. The cry of human misery would empty his pockets, but he does not appear to go maudlin over the spectacle of organized laziness.

Hopefulness and good cheer sing through all his talk. The sight of a flag, gleaming like a blossom among the trees as it flutters from the cupola of a country schoolhouse, brings a new light into his eyes, and he bends to look at it as long as the train holds it in sight; the look in his eyes, on his face, is proud, and there is not even one convulsive effort to blush for "the flag that has never known defeat," and on the gleaming stripes of which he can read "Valley Forge," "Trenton," "Saratoga," "Bunker Hill," "Yorktown." Now, you are not going to waste words, asking that man his politics. You know them as well as you know your own, though the subject of politics hasn't been so much as hinted at.

But he gets off at his station, and another man drops into the seat by your side. You send up the usual signal—a weather rocket. The new man groans. He looks out of the window and sees the country all "burned up." How is it in his section? you ask. He groans again. "All drowned out," he says. "Hain't seen the sun for twenty days. What's in the ground is rotting, and what's on top of the ground is blighted." Him? oh, he's just traveling around, right now, looking for a new location.

He was in a little general-merchandise business in Ohio, but it didn't pay. Competition too strong. Everybody cutting one another's throats. Then he went to Indiana; traded for a sawmill. No money in it. Moved to Illinois, and bought a fruit farm. Had three bad years, and traded for an interest in a furniture factory in Michigan. Too crowded; every other town in Michigan had one. Sold out and bought a timber tract in Minnesota. Couldn't compete with Canada lumber; no protection for American industry. Traded for a Dakota wheat farm. Stood one year of drouth and one of hail-storms, and sold out. Bought a cattle ranch in Montana. Not enough money in the country to handle his business; all the money in the banks and trusts. Traded off his cattle and land for a beet-sugar investment in Nebraska. Could have done fairly well, but there was no money in the country. Everything controlled by eastern sharks.

Sold out and got some cotton land in Texas, in the

Red River country. Cotton never saw seven cents that year. Lot of sharks and trusts, and big combines, all against him. Traded for a mine in New Mexico. A whole solid mountain of ore, and it wasn't worth the handling; everything dead against him. Sold it for what he could get, and came out here, and now he was looking around for a chance to get rid of what he had and locate somewhere else; didn't care particularly where, so that it was some place where he could have a chance. Didn't believe there was such a place for a man with limited means. Everything in the hands of the big combines. He'd lived in eleven states in twelve years, and one was about as bad as the other. Farms all mortgage-ridden. Factories closed, or men working on starvation wages. Country overrun with men hunting work, and no work for anybody. Crime on the increase. Insane asylums overflowing. Almshouses crowded. Children crying for bread. No signs of any betterment in the condition of things, either.

If it wasn't that they were just as bad as they possibly could be, the signs are that they would be worse before they would be better. Now, you are not going to ask that man how he is going to vote. You haven't said politics to him, but you know very well what party he trains with.

So, you see, son, though you should control your lips and hold your tongue and talk ever so little, people would be very apt to find out a great deal about you from what you did say, and as well, from what you don't say. In fact, I think the man who says the least puts the most of himself into his laconic condensations. Grant the Silent wrote his magnanimous character across the pages of his country's history when he said, "Let us have peace." And Lincoln the Great wrote his life in the sentence, "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

It is a great thing for you to learn to say the right thing at the right time, in the right way. And "how long will it take you to learn to do that?" Oh, I don't know. It depends on how diligently you apply yourself to learning to talk. Possibly in about forty-five or fifty years, I should say. Or, it might be at twenty-five. You need not say much, just a sentence or two. Because, on earth, as it is in

Heaven, a man—or a woman—is not heard for his much speaking. You see, the men and women who are remembered for what they said, were people whose lives grew to the thought that was clothed in words, who had very little thought concerning the aptness of the phrase, but much for the life and character that was father to the words. This is an age of "wonders" of beginning. What you want to do is to keep right on. My desk is daily littered with circulars from all sorts of agents and bureaus bringing before the notice of the not-overly-eager people all manner of youthful phenomena. Here is a "girl dialect reader"—and a fearful and wonderful thing a "girl dialect" must be; you hear it occasionally on the trolley-cars—who pronounces at sight the fearful and wonderful spelling you see—but never try to pronounce—in the magazines stories, which are supposed to represent the language of the benighted people living in the adjoining state.

That girl's organs of phonation must be gnarled and twisted like a pretzel, if they can render some of these dialect stories aloud. Her face must be a study during her reading. It must impress one that she is training for a gum-chewing contest. And here is a new "boy orator," who orates on any given theme with much shrill sound and varied sense. Principally accents. And here, there, and everywhere are "boy preachers" startling the world with new strange light, such as never was on sea or land it is hoped, and never will be again, on simple texts, such texts as the angels have desired to look into, but have refrained, probably knowing that the "boy preacher" would come along some day and make it all plain, even to the angelic understanding.

Now, I like to see you taking hold of the world's work in deadly earnest, and I do want to see you do it so well that the rest of us will have nothing to do about it but sit in the audience and applaud and call for encores. But, dear me, the wonder is what becomes of the "wonders" when they grow up. Many of these "child wonders" were in print when your grandfather was teaching me to crow, and I am no spring chicken by several layers of muscular tissue. I am now filed away among the back numbers, taken down and dusted only when somebody is looking up some long-forgotten "bygone".

But year by year these circulars of the "child wonder" come in my mail with the same old pictures, only they have been changed from the old woodcut to the unwrinkled and expressionless half-tone of eternal youth. And that, I consider, is overdoing the child business. You see, son, there is no such thing as a "boy orator." You can't find the word in the dictionary. There is just an orator, or a poet, or a preacher; boy, girl, woman or man, as it may happen. A sapling is valuable merely because it isn't going to be a sapling very long. If it continues to be a sapling, it goes to the cooper shop and is adzed into a hoop-pole, and is used to hold a barrel together that contains pork, or molasses. Or something. Generally something.

If a boy doesn't quit being a boy by the time he is old enough to help elect a president of the United States, I am afraid that the boy habit is confirmed in him, and he will go down to his grave, white-haired and toothless, known as the "boy-something-or-other." And all that time, you see, there will be a man lacking in the world, just because that youngster didn't make a mighty effort and break himself of the habit of being a boy before he became hopelessly addicted to it. If the sapling does what is expected of it, and what God intended it should do, it will soon cease to be a sapling, and grow to a mighty tree, gnarled and scarred with a thousand hard fights with storm and tempest, and all the grander and nobler for the struggles and conquests. So keep on growing, son, and don't be afraid of saying what you think now, for fear you may make some mistake.

Why, you will, whether you talk or keep silent. Mistakes? Why, they are sometimes a means of grace. One day on the train, going from Somewhere to Somewherelse, the conductor came along, looked, and said bruskly, "Tikt!"

"Oh," I told him, "the other conductor took up my ticket."

Where was I going? I told him. Then he said I had a coupon ticket, if, he added, with a cloud of suspicion lowering on his brow, I had any, and the other conductor only tore off the coupon.

I insisted that he had lifted the entire shooting-match, as it were, and had left me in my present unprotected and uncredentialed condition, wandering over the country without any checks on my baggage or conduct.

But he knew better than that, because he knew that conductor. My fare to Somewhere would be "somenny". There is no argument that prevails with a conductor like cash fare, so I meekly unloaded, but besought him to wire back for my lost ticket!

In an hour he came back to me. He gave me back my money; he said the other conductor had made a mistake. But he maintained his own position by saying that he had been with that man on the road for seventeen years, and he had never before known him to make the slightest mistake.

And I said that I had known myself less or more accurately for more than fifty years, and if I should go to bed some night and there remember that I hadn't made a mistake that day, I should get up and correct the omission ere I went to sleep, lest something untoward should happen in the night.

He said that no careful man ever made mistakes.

I insisted that all human men did, at one time or another, and frequently at both.

Then a smooth-shaven man with a straight slit across his face right under his nose which I observed he used for a mouth, reinforced the conductor, and said that a man like that, meaning myself, would better have been born animal, as brute instinct was better than such fallible intelligence.

And I insisted that instinct was a most erroneous guide; that when it came in contact with civilization and human conditions, it was faulty, incorrect, stupid and misleading. We quarreled until we came to a station where we waited for a train, and the man with the slit under his nose said: "There comes a dog down the street. We'll watch him, and you won't see him make a mistake while he is in sight."

We all agreed, and gathered at the windows, while the intelligent pointer trotted along into the field of observation, never dreaming that he was taking part in a symposium on mental science, unconscious influence, the infallibility of instinct and the weakness of intelligence. He saw or smelled something in an ash heap, ran eagerly over to inspect it, sniffed it carefully, and turned away, disappointed.

"Mistake number one," said the umpire; which part I kindly volunteered to play, myself; "he thought it was a mutton-chop, and it was only an old shoe."

The conductor said that should not count; he didn't know what it was, and was only investigating.

I said, "Yes, and it didn't turn out to be what his instinct told him it was. Same thing had happened to the conductor, who took up my ticket, supposing it was local." Tally one for humanity.

Then the dog, starting to cross the street, saw a country dog trotting along under a wagon. The pointer raised a town-bred growl, sailed under the wagon after the collie, and came out between the wheels in about two seconds, preceded by a howl that you could hang your hat on, the worst-whipped dog in the shortest space of time anybody ever saw.

"Mistake number two," said the umpire; "tackled the wrong dog."

We watched him with increasing interest now, as he got out of this trouble, and ambled uncertainly down the street, muttering to himself about his wrongs, and administering such consolatory balm to his wounded feelings and punctured hide as his healing tongue could supply. Two men were standing on the sidewalk, talking politics, and one of them had his right hand extended in statesmanlike gesticulation, palm upward. Glad for anything that ever so remotely resembled human sympathy and friendly overture, the dog trotted up, and, thrusting his cold nose and dripping tongue into the outstretched hand, scared the orator into a frenzied yell, and received a whack over the head from his cane that made the poor dog howl afresh over this accumulation of hostility and woe.

"Mistake number three," tallied the umpire; "meddled in politics."

"But," the conductor said, "that was just a piece of brutality on the part of the man; the dog's overtures were friendly enough."

But the passenger who wore diamonds in a blue shirt with green cuffs and a pink collar, said, "The dog had no business to butt into a discussion that he wasn't interested in, without an invitation. No man would do such a thing unless he expected to get a jolt in the neck and could stand the gaff."

Tally four for human intelligence. The dog looked very much depressed after this rejection of his appeal for sympathy. Apparently it rankled under his liver-colored spots, and he made up his canine instinct to avenge himself upon some small and safe member of the inhuman human race. Seeing a boy of twelve or fourteen years in the street, he made a dash at him, barking furiously, and concentrating all his wrath against this feeble representative of mankind. The boy looked at his assailant for one brief breath in utter amazement. Then he stooped down, picked up the stone that is always found in deadly proximity to any real boy, and firing it with a twist that only a boy can impart to a missile, fetched the dog a resounding welt with it that knocked the breath out of him so far that he couldn't get it back to yell with for two minutes. Twice the dog lay down in the dust and tried to die, and when he couldn't do it, by reason of having no breath with which to expire, he sat up and made speechless faces at the cold unpitying skies.

"Mistake numer five," the umpire said. But a woman who was tearfully sympathizing with the dog against all mankind, filed a protest. She said, "The dog was goaded into his rash act by cruelty and persecution; he had been stung to madness by his wrongs; he had—"

"Stung, nothing!" the man with the diamonds and the multi-colored shirt exclaimed; "why, a pup six weeks old ought to know better than to bark at a boy with his hands untied and a stone in the same street. Would you, with your mere human intelligence, madam, sass a strange boy in the street?"

And the gentle champion of the dog was silent.

The next opportunity the dog saw for getting into trouble was a brindle cow, with one horn, and that crumpled, stealing corn out of a farmer's wagon. He made a swift charge to chase her away; she held an ear of corn in her mouth at a most nonchalantly insolent angle, much as a "bad man" carries his cigar, described an invisible V in the air, with her head, and tossed the dog upon the nearest awning, whence he rolled to the ground calling gods and men to witness that he wished he hadn't.

"Tally for the dog," said the man with the slit;

"he tried to do a good deed and protect an honest man's property from a marauding thief, and suffered martyrdom in the discharge of a noble duty."

"Yes," said the umpire, "but his mistake was in approaching the cow at the wrong end. He should never fool around that end of a cow, or the other end of a mule. Zeal commended; methods condemned."

And then, as they watched to see what would happen next, the town marshal came along. The officer whistled and the dog came limping up to be comforted and praised. The dog wore no collar. He was an unlicensed reformer. He had no tag. The marshal roped him by the neck and hauled him off to the pound.

"Climax of mistakes," the umpire decided; "lost his credentials and had no place in the convention at all."

"Had no business on the street," said the man with the sporty shirt; "it wasn't his day. Five dollars or the sausage machine."

And it was agreed that every day in the year a man should be thankful that he belonged to the human race, and that if he made many mistakes with his heedless and over-busy tongue, he had still his nimble and rapid-fire mouth with which to explain, and apologize for, and repent those mistakes.

THE SIX-FINGERED MAN

EVERY careless traveler has observed the easy and graceful facility with which certain people can accomplish the apparently delicate ceremony of introducing two entire strangers, the master of ceremonies being a yet greater stranger to each of the twain.

I was once upon a time making a journey across a small portion of this planet, sitting alone by the car window and hoping that nobody had taken the upper flat in my compartment, when a man whose freshness chilled me seated himself opposite me, threw his feet airily upon the seat beside me, saying in a loud tone and with extravagant hospitality, "Make yourself at home!" He explained to me, as I received his advances with somewhat cold respect, that a young lady of forty-eight summers was occupying the lower floor of his section, and had appropriated his seat for her baggage-room, while at the same time she had transformed the entire premises into a cold storage apartment.

The man said that he had sat amidst her luggage until the cold chills began to run up and down his back, and he had no doubt he was even now on the direct road to an attack of pneumonia. He then went on to inform me, in that easy, confidential, autobiographical turn, that he lived in Kolusa, Tipton County, when he was home; he had been married twice, and had five children—all born to him by his first wife. "Three boys," he said, and remained for a moment or two in silence, when he suddenly looked up and added, "and two girls." You can not imagine what a load was lifted off my mind when I learned what those remaining children were. You see he hadn't told me, and I felt a little delicate about asking.

The man noted the look of interest in my face and went on with his narrative. His first wife was a woman of very despondent temperament, as good a woman, he said, as ever lived, but always afraid something was going to happen; always worried about the children or something. She was a good mother to the children, too; but then she was never well—always sick with some kind of complaint; get out of bed to-day, well over an attack of one thing, and go back to bed to-morrow with something else. This, the man said, made it almighty hard for him.

He sighed so deeply at the remembrance of the hard lines through which he had passed that I sympathized with him, in pitiful praise of murmured condolence, and asked him if this continuous illness seemed to affect his wife any?

Oh, no, he said; not so much as it did him; she appeared to get sort of used to it like; but it was different with him. He had to nurse her a great deal of the time, and that kept him up nights and kept him about the house a good deal during the day, and came mighty nigh breaking him down. People used to wonder how he stood it. His wife didn't seem to realize how hard it was on him, and when he'd speak of hiring a nurse she would say they couldn't afford it, and she'd rather have him, anyhow. I said his was indeed a sorrowful case; that some women were very obtuse about these things; they didn't stop to think, and even when they were dying didn't appear to care how much trouble they made a man.

Oh, well, he said, he didn't believe his wife was heartless, or if you came to that, really thoughtless about it; she just didn't seem to realize, being a woman, how hard these things are on a man. She didn't try to make it any harder for him than what she could help, but she didn't realize how a sick wife about the house broke into a man's time and kept him away from his business, nor how much of the care of the house she threw on him. His first wife was a good woman and had been a good mother to his five children, but she never seemed to know what a care she was to him. I felt the tears coming into my eyes as I told him how it warmed my heart to meet a stranger and find him so magnanimous and unselfish; his defense of his dead wife was something beautiful. The man thanked me and said he liked to do the square thing by everybody.

I looked around for that pleasantly suggestive case of surgical instruments, heroic size, which they carry on the cars, labeled "ax, saw, hammer." I could not see it and I suppose they are not furnished the sleeping-cars, on account of the temptation that would present itself to the porter to use them when he wanted to get the passengers out of bed about one hundred and twenty-five miles before reaching their respective stations.

But just here another stranger entered the section, rather timidly explaining that he had a mortgage on the sky parlor, which he would like to foreclose as soon as the porter got that far down the docket. The man with the inconsiderate wife who was sick all the time took my valise off the seat beside me and welcomed the stranger with a hospitable alacrity. "Sit right down there," he said. "You won't crowd anybody. Let's see; I don't know as I ever saw you before. What is your name?"

The stranger said his name was Simpson; Abel Simpson, and he was from Wyalusing.

"Oh, yes," exclaimed the martyr. "I'm glad to know you, Mr. Simpson. Let me make you acquainted with—I don't know your name?" he added, with an interrogation torpedo leveled in my direction. I supplied the desired autobiographical data and he completed the introduction: "I want you to know my friend, Mr. Simpson;" then he wanted Mr. Simpson to know his friend, Mr. Me, and then concluded the touching picture of newly cemented friendships by introducing us both to our mutual friend. "My name is Benton," he said, "Jefferson Benton; just call me Jeff; everybody calls me Jeff—"

And then he took up his parable once more and rattled away, but I don't remember much, if indeed I heard much of anything my new-found old friends said after that. I heard Mr. Simpson promise to call him Jeff, exacting from him, in reciprocity therefor, a pledge to address him evermore as Abe; then, as the third member of this trio of dear old friends who had never seen or heard of one another in their lives, I signed the agreement to say Jeff and Abe, and in response to their appeal for my own nickname, I basely dissembled, and told Damon and Pythias that there was no good nickname for my Christian name, and Dionysius was too long to be used on anything but a hook and ladder truck, but they might call me "Birdie."

But I was interested only in my old friend, Abe

Simpson. Not in what he said, but in what he was; for who he might be I didn't care a copper. When I grasped the hand of this stanch old friend of mine I was astonished to observe that I had a whole handful of fingers swept within my grasp. I could not help glancing at the honest hand of my good old friend after I had relinquished it, and lo, all my half-wakened suspicions were realized. Here was a man among ten thousand. Among all the friends whom my soul has grappled to itself with hooks of steel by the charm of a three-minute railway introduction, Abe Simpson stands out in vivid relief against the commonplace background of a legion of friends with normal anatomies. He is the only friend I have in all this world who has six fingers on each hand. When Abe Simpson shakes hands with you he does it in no half-hearted, short-fingered way.

Now, there is a man worth knowing. A man, every inch of him. I looked at him with ever-increasing interest. Here, I thought, is a man with a pedigree. Biddle and Astor and Winthrop, Quaker and Knickerbocker and Puritan may come to this friend of mine with their hats under their arms and ask after his health. For I looked into a book older and truer, and about better people, than Burke's *Peerage,* and hunted up Abe's family. I found that he had an ancestry older than "the boy preacher." His "gre't-gre't-gre't-grandfather" was a Gittite, a Philistine of the Philistines; and a Goliath by birth. For in the Book—II Samuel, XXI, 20, I read: "And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant."

Now, the giant was the redoubtable Goliath. Abe Simpson was a good man to his fingers' ends, I judged from his conversation. He had none of the mean small race-prejudice against the Chosen People, which is the mark of little souls, although he had sore cause to feel bitterly toward them, because David killed the great Goliath, and Jonathan, a nephew of David, slew this terrible Philistine with the multitudinous fingers and toes. But although several times I intentionally and with marked purpose turned the conversation Old Testamentward, and spoke of the past glory of Israel in the field of military achievement, Abe Simpson never once displayed the slightest bitterness; no long-slumbering dream of revenge was awakened in his breast as we calmly discussed the deeds of the puissant David.

His forgiving spirit was charming in its modesty, too. He did not flourish his pardon of his family's enemies and conquerors in a printed proclamation, as a king or a president would do; he just said nothing about it. That was noble in him. I fear me if some man slew my grandfather, from whom I had inherited more digits than the famous old lady who wore "rings on her fingers and bells on her toes," the extra fingers would cause me to remember my slaughtered grandsire every time I astonished some gentle manicure.

I fell to wondering greatly if the more there was of a man the more of a man he was, if that was one reason why great big men as a rule are good-natured and big-hearted. It is the little fellows usually who are quick-tempered as terriers and lively as wasps—frequently in the same liveliness. If the extra finger does any good in softening the temper and mellowing the disposition I know some men who should be grafted with fingers all the way up their arms.

Abe Simpson didn't appear to mind the extra fingers, nor yet to be proud of them. I couldn't see that they were of the least use to him. I noticed that when he thrust his hand into his pocket the extra finger stuck out, and, with the thumb sticking out at right angles on the opposite side, gave his hand the appearance of having a hilt to it. When he hung up his overcoat I saw the wrists of a pair of dogskin gloves projecting from a pocket.

Straightway I fell to wondering if he had his gloves made to order, or if there were six-fingered people in the world in numbers sufficient to justify the glovers in manufacturing for the trade choice and assorted lines of six-fingered gloves. Which one did he call his "little finger?" I wondered. If he were a baseball pitcher would that auxiliary finger enable him to invent some new inexplicable, corkscrew curve that would baffle the keenest gaze of any but a three-eyed batter? What a "phenomenon" he would be! Why, I thought, oh, why was not my friend, Abe Simpson, born a Paderewski? How much better would it be for a brilliant and gifted pianist to have more fingers and less hair! The chords he could reach and combine, the runs he could make, the bird-like trills and the complicated and intricate passages he could execute to the despair of the five-fingered artists! And then see what an impulse would be given musical thought; there would be published a new work on "six-finger exercises" and we should have "duets for four hands and twenty-four fingers."

How many things a man might do if he but had six fingers! He could always have a "finger in the pie" even when there was an additional pie—one more than the average man could compass.

And yet it occurred to me, as I sat watching my old friend, Abe Simpson (and wishing that I had been his lifelong friend for a quarter of an hour instead of a scant five minutes, that I might feel sufficiently intimate with him to ask him a few of the confidential conundrums with which I was catechizing my own ignorance), that the possession of six fingers would bring with it some disadvantages.

Think of having your ears boxed, if you were a child, by a teacher with an extra finger with an additional tingle in it. Think of fighting a boy who could clutch two fingerfuls more of your hair than you could grip of his. And if your fingers, as the fingers of some people are, were all thumbs, what a burden would be the superfluous thumb!

And then there appears to be a singular fatality hanging over the uneasy hand that wears three pairs of fingers. I can think just now of but two eminent six-fingered people in history; one was the son of Goliath, and the other was a woman, beautiful, accomplished, admired—a queen of England, Anne Boleyn. The giant was slain in the prime of his life and Anne Boleyn was beheaded in the bloom of her beauty and womanhood. How much better had it been for these two distinguished children of history had they had each an extra head, rather than a supernumerary finger!

I don't suppose I shall ever meet my friend, Abe Simpson, again, when I might have courage to ask him to solve all these problems for me. Jeff Benton I will meet, scores and thousands of times. Isn't that always the way? The man for whose deeds and thoughts and opinions you don't care a copper, whose reminiscences are commonplace to dreariness, meets you at every turn and crossing in life. But the man who is interesting to his six fingers' ends is either taciturn as a sphinx, or else talks about anything in the world rather than himself. Oft as I get aboard a railway train or steamboat I shall meet my friend, Jeff Benton, with his tireless mouth and slumbering brain, but I have shaken hands with my dear old friend, Abe Simpson, in all human probability, for the last time.

> "He was a man, take him for all in all,
> And a couple of fingers over, good Horatio,
> I shall not look upon his like again."

THE AVERAGE MAN

ONCE upon a time, the Reverend Thomas K. Beecher, of Elmira, brother to Henry Ward Beecher, got into some kind of quarrel with a man named Smith, down at Cohoes. Thomas K. Beecher wrote the presumptuous man a defiant little note, saying curtly, "Do you want to get into a quarrel with the Beecher family?" And the man wrote back with a snarl, "Do you want a fight with the Smith family?" And no Beecher could stand that; Thomas K. laughed and hastened to make terms. Not long ago I heard an impassioned orator say, "What would the world do without its Napoleons, its Edisons, its Homers?" Well, I reckon we'd have to worry along with our Wellingtons, our Bells, and our Kiplings. But a question far more momentous is, "What would become of the world without its Smiths, its Joneses, and its Robinsons?" Ah, my boy, they are the people. Walt Whitman sings somewhere:

THE AVERAGE MAN

"Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those who themselves sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and to all overcome heroes!
And to the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!"

Right nobly thought and right grandly sung, prophet of the plain people, minstrel of the common clay! Somebody must sing for the defeated and the obscure. While the great prophets chant the glories of the glorious and the wonders of the wonderful, some minor prophet must trill his little pipe with what feeble breath his gasping lungs can supply, for the commonplace people and the commonplace things of life, which are, after all, no commoner than air and water.

One Yellowstone Park is enough for the whole wide world. But we must have millions of springs to one red-hot geyser. One grove of giant Sequoias the world must have, but we must have millions of acres of good shade and fruit trees. And grass! Man alive, how much grass the world requires.

Principally to "keep off". What should we do when we went to town, if we didn't have to keep off the grass? The world could exist without Niagara Falls and the Alps, and the Rockies, but we must have a fair supply of good drinking-water and fertile farming land. And the farm need not be any more picturesque than a suburban truck patch. That's one reason why I choose to preach on "averages" this morning. Another reason is, that it is the easiest thing on earth to talk about. It isn't artistic, at all. It isn't portraiture; it isn't cartoon work; it isn't scene-painting. It is just a job of calcimining with a flat brush on a plain wall. Anybody can do that. And then, it's the only thing I can do. I might have mentioned that first, and saved time, but that wouldn't have been mediocre.

You know, it is always so restful to meet up with the average man, after fate has cast you for ever so short a time in the society of giants. So many times do we hear the people who believe in "the good old days" quote to us, "There were giants in the earth in those days." So there were. So there were. And I always want to go on and read the rest of that chapter in Genesis—just a couple of verses farther on—"and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth."

But of course the wisdom and patience that bears even with "giants" went on and corrected the fault of "giantism" by multiplying the average people, who, as they run the earth more and more, are daily getting it into better shape. The average man doesn't talk in blank verse and epigrams, which are very well in books, but which rather overcome one in conversation, especially when the subject is hams or the price of cotton. That's why a book that is full of "smart" characters wearies you. And the war correspondent! What lurid reading he has been furnishing us. Last week you read in the despatches from Aaaardvaaaark Kppfpe, the startling information that "one of the shells set fire to an ammunition wagon which burned all day." I bought four different papers to see if I couldn't get some reassuring variation on that, but no, Democrat, Republican, Prohibitionist and Pop, they each and all stuck to it that "the ammunition wagon burned all day."

I had to accept it, and now, I ask forgiveness of an old soldier for having doubted his calm statement that he dropped the contents of his pipe on some loose powder in a magazine one day, but realizing that it was life or death, he went to work and "stamped it out with his feet, so that not more than a bushel and a half of the powder was burned." I confess with shame that I set that down, when I first heard it, as a lie. Now, since the correspondent demands that I accept the slow-combustion ammunition wagon, I indorse the smoldering powder magazine. And the next hesitating sinner who comes to me with serious doubts on the subject of Jonah and the whale will get an up-to-date newspaper pulled on him.

But what I was going to say was this, that the very things some men tell you are utterly impossible are the things that the average man is fond of doing. Admiral Dewey isn't an average man, by any means, but he never would have been Admiral Dewey if he hadn't had with him, on divers occasions, a few hundred average men on whom he could rely. Hand to hand, with no average man to help him, Napoleon Bonaparte would have been unable to stand before James Jeffries, Esquire, for one round. Face to face, in the open, Wellington would have fallen before the quick and deadly aim of Buffalo Bill before the Iron Duke coud have reached around for his gun.

These were great men, Wellington and Napoleon, but it took several hundred thousand average men to make them render their greatness available. "We don't have the giants there were on earth in the old days," says Backnumber. Well, yes, we do, but they are not playing star parts any more. There was a time when a few men owned the earth, when a king merely made a gesture—lifted a finger, when he wanted a thing done, when he stamped his foot and a million men sprang from the ground to do his bidding. Now his majesty deals with the average man. He submits his wishes to Parliament, or something like it with another name, composed of the averagest kind of average men—everybody knows that. They take the wish of his majesty into what they call respectful consideration. They refer it to a committee, which may report it back for further discussion or may bury it in a pigeon-hole, and finally it may be utterly rejected for merely average reasons.

'Tisn't so very long ago that a farm-hand began work before it was light enough to see the dark, and worked until he had been asleep for an hour. That was when the man who owned the farm was a great man. The hours of the laboring man used to be twelve, and then they dropped to ten, and now eight is good enough and long enough for them since the average man began to count himself when they all stood up. Oh, son, what we need is not more giants, but just a little better average for the average man, and then lots more of him. The smallest thing in the military history of Prussia is—or forever was—the Potsdam Grenadier Guards, organized by Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. The king's heart and thought were his army, though he never had but one war, and that a most insignificant one. And this was his pet regiment. "Twenty-four hundred sons of Anak;" the shortest man nearly seven feet tall; the tallest nearly nine! Three battalions of giants; they were hired, kidnapped, stolen, bought, got in any way. One recruit, James Kirkman, an

Irishman, cost twelve hundred pounds before he was safely enlisted.

And the first thing Frederick the Great did when he became king, the Frederick who was a soldier, was promptly to disband this regiment of giants, to transfer a few of the men "not of inhuman height" into other regiments, and let the "giants" drift where they would, so long as they didn't get into the army. "Giants" are no good, my son. Even to-day a man may be so tall and big they won't accept him as a recruit in our own army. A little fellow may get into the drum corps, but there is no place for a "giant," not even in the artillery.

The average man will always run things, my son. He will always be in the majority. Because the man out of the average doesn't really fit in anywhere. And there are little things which we must do for ourselves every day, that no one—not even the truly great—can do for us. Once upon a time I stood looking at a friend of mine, a watchmaker, putting a watch together. I think, indeed, it was my watch.

Because it was my own, I had thought I could do as I pleased with it—a very common mistake which the average man is prone to make, this thinking that a man can do as he will with what is his own. I had taken it apart to see why it wouldn't run, after I had dropped it down the stairs. And when I tried to put it together again I had more wheels and springs and little screws and things piled upon the table than you could have packed into a valise. So I put the whole assortment into a box and carried it to my friend, the watchmaker. He adjusted delicate bits of machinery that I could scarcely see; tiny screws that I couldn't pick up; delicate springs I was afraid to breathe upon; fairy wheels and little dreams of jewels. The work appeared little less than a miracle to me. I said:

"I see you have some artificial eyes in the window; now, if a man preferred a real eye, one with which he could see, rather than a glass one, could you make him one?"

But he laughed and said that was a little beyond his skill. But I said:

"Well, they make artificial arms and legs that are very like the originals?"

"Yes," he said, "that you can fight and run with."

"That's the right order," I assented. "And teeth they make, of course?"

"That you can smile and bite with," he said.

Again I admired the beautiful order in which he aligned the functions of the "human warious," and added that that they also make false noses.

"That may be blown," he said, "and I think I have known a man who snored with a wax nose."

And then, his work being finished, he picked up my hat, placed it on my head, and we made ready to go out and yell our lungs to rags over a baseball game. But he didn't adjust my hat comfortably, and I told him to try again. He failed. I showed him exactly how I wore it. I put it on half a dozen times, and he tried it half a dozen times after me. And at last he gave it up. I gave it, just as you do, the merest shadow of a touch, sometimes only a little shake of the head, to settle it into precisely the right place. It looks like the simplest thing on earth, but it is one thing that no man can do for another. No, it isn't because the man has for years grown accustomed to doing it for himself. A mother can't make her tiny little boy wear his hat just as she puts it on his head. Heaven be praised. I have seen babies on the train—boy babies—rebel with shrieks and fierce clutches, at the mother's adjustment of the baby's head-dress.

My friend, the watchmaker, is a mechanical genius. He can make a watch, and adjust the most delicate machinery the human eye can see, and do it so well and so accurately that it will run and keep perfect time for years, yet he can't put my hat—a common soft felt thing that cost about a dollar—on my head—the most careless and forgetful head in America—in a way that I do, or will wear it. So the average man has always some little trait of perfect independence about him, some thing that he must and will and does do his own way. Doesn't make much fuss about it; doesn't make any unless the great man insists on his wearing his hat as greatness thinks it should be worn; just puts it on his own head in his own way and wears it that way.

There is nothing on earth quite so interesting as average people. They are so interesting they deserve to be rated among "things." All things are not people, but a great many—that is to say, some people are things. Now, I have traveled a great deal—I don't like to say how much, lest I might discourage people who haven't been so far. But I have been to Monrovia and Santa Monica, and am contemplating a trip to Escondido and Compton, and all this travel broadens one's views and enlarges one's sympathies, and leads one to form a better estimate of one's judgment of one's prejudices about one. And in all the countries I have visited, outside of cattle and animals—and I have never visited any inside—I have scarcely found a living person except people. People! Why, they're as common as grass. Peoria county used to be full of them when I was a boy. I've seen hundreds of them. I suppose that is one reason why I stand so little in awe of them. I used to be afraid of them. But that was before I found out how many of them there are in the world. And all so much alike.

I used to be afraid of Great Men and Distinguished Women. The people, you know, who look wise, and talk bass, and say "Ah!" with a circumflex that fairly runs up and down your spine. You know; the people who are afraid to stand very near the edge of the world, lest they should tip it so far over it would shift its ballast, "turn turtle" and slide them off into everlasting space. I used to hold my hat in my hand when I talked with these people, and say "sir" and "ma'am". But after I began my travels, and got forty miles from home, I discovered that they were the same kind of people that inhabited the earth. The first member of congress I ever met looked exactly like a man who used to keep store in Mossville. And when I walked up very respectfully to shake his extended finger, it was the same man. I used to admire the nice exactness with which he could cut cheese. And to the day of his death there was never anything else which he could do quite so well.

He was in congress eight years, and never knew what committee he was on. He never opened his head but once, all the time he was there. That was one morning when he arose at the close of the chaplain's prayer, caught the speaker's eye, and moved that it be received and adopted. He saved up all his franks for eight years, to use when he got to be old and helpless, he said. "What did we keep him there so long for?" I don't know. Same reason the rest of the people kept their congressmen, I reckon.

I once met a real lord in my travels. He looked the living image of Bud Harmerson, who used to come to Copperas Creek twice a year and hold auction sales of the "old masters". I've seen him knock down a genuine Raphael—he guaranteed it himself, gave a written guarantee over Raphael's own signature, for ten years—for two dollars and eighty cents, that you couldn't buy to-day for eight dollars. The lord was balder than Bud, but his nose wasn't so red, and he hadn't such a good voice. I was disappointed bitterly, at first, and was disposed to resent his lordship, until I had traveled a little farther, and begun to see that neither the auctioneer nor the nobleman could help being people. It is a hard matter to get out of the human race, after you have once been born, now I tell you.

In his church the average man is always the working member. He is never on the Reception Committee on the great days when the great man comes.

But he is on half a dozen grubbing committees that work all the time for the reward of hearing those who sit in the high seats of the synagogue wonder "why that committee doesn't do something." After all the big subscriptions are in, he is sent around with a cheap note-book to rake for halves and quarters. Having no artistic taste or any fine sense of proportions, he is of no earthly use the day before the fair, but he is a whole team to sweep up and lug out the débris the next day. His wife does not preside at the silk bazaar. She boils the ham.

At the picnic he swings the children until the dinner is eaten. He hunts up the lost packages, and is sent off up-town under the blazing sun in mid-afternoon to hold the train until it is a little later and the rest of them can stroll up in the cool of the afternoon. He also goes to the spring for a couple of pails of drinking water. Spring isn't over a mile and a half away. Sometimes, when he returns, they say, "Oh, thank you!" and if the company is exceedingly grateful, they say, "Oh, thank you very much!" accent heavy on the "very." But when they say that they always send him away for ice. That "thank you" does for both water and ice.

And the most angelic thing there is about the average man is that after he has rendered his fellow-man any little service or kindness that comes to his always over-busied hand, he doesn't seem to care very much whether they are grateful for it or not. The average man actually appears to find a great deal of happiness in being serviceable. He is usually a salaried man. Never expects to be very rich, except in children, and he's the very kind of man who ought to have a dozen, and who deserves a pension for every one, because the stock never runs out or runs down—always improves, and the state and society is a constant debtor to the average man. If it wasn't for him, the world would soon run to seed. The families of the great die out; or worse, they fizzle and fuzzle and fazzle along, instead of dying gloriously. They descend from Napoleon the Great to Napoleon the Little, from George Washington to zero.

But the Smiths and the Browns and the Joneses have a strong-armed, clear-headed, clean-handed, honest-hearted man in every generation; haven't failed to produce him on time every time the roll has been called since Adam Jones married Eve Smith and they sang Welsh cradle songs to little Abel. Cain was a Uitlander; he was a remarkable man, of strong passions, who had no patience with religious people, and see what became of him. A most intolerant fellow. The Earth is fondest of the children whom she nurses at her own breast; the children who are born and who live nearest the soil; and she makes them strong, and teaches them the secrets of the hidden springs, and the blessings of the deep that lieth under; the mysteries of their birthland; the secret of patience, and the talisman of power. Men like Garfield, and Lincoln, and Andrew Jackson, and other sons of average men.

Why, the patience of the average man is a power in itself. Oh, my boy, cultivate the grace of patience. We can get along without brilliant women and great men. They don't mix with the brood of humanity very much. They must have single perches for themselves, away up out of the reach of the rest of us, and they don't do the great big world very much good, after all. I suppose it's just as well that the great folk do keep away from us. When they come down and mingle with the rest of us, we are very apt to find them out. And then, a long farewell to all their greatness.

We don't need the rushing people all the time. Oh, now and then one or two may be very good things, but the fretful, eager, hurrying, restless world has greater need of patient people. The patient man or woman who finds strength in "quietness and confidence"; who can be patient not only with our sins and our glaring faults, but with our fads and follies; who can be quiet as the gods when even the softest answer would have a sting; when the gentlest touch would stir up contention; who can wait for storms to blow over and for wrongs to right themselves in God's own time and way; who can endure slight and injury until the wounded heart has forgotten the hurt that made the scar. Be patient, boy, be patient. And you'll wear out everything and everybody that vexes you.

THE END

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